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## The Story of Sarasota: the history of the city and county of Sarasota, Florida

Karl H. Grismer

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# *The Story of Sarasota*



*Dedicated to* THE LITTLE WOMAN  
DE TREW GRISMER

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# The STORY OF SARASOTA

*The History of the City and County of Sarasota, Florida*



By KARL H. GRISMER

*Author of*

"THE HISTORY OF ST. PETERSBURG"

"THE HISTORY OF KENT, OHIO"



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A birdseye view of Sarasota in 1946, looking west from above the city. Sarasota Pass is shown at the left and

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## PROLOGUE

*Dreams of gold, and silver, and sparkling gems brought conquistadors of Spain to the shores of Florida more than four hundred years ago. They were bitterly resisted by the people we call the Indians—men who loved Florida because of its golden sunshine, its silvery moon in velvet skies, and the sparkling sand on snow-white beaches.*

*For three hundred years the Indians continued battling fair-skinned foes. But the once mighty tribes became weakened by endless wars, white man's diseases, and intermarriage with lesser races.*

*A hundred years ago the last of the Indians, the Seminoles, were conquered, not because they had lost their love for Florida, or their willingness to die for it, but because their enemies came in overwhelming numbers.*

*Today, Florida is loved as ardently as the Indians ever loved it—by people who came here from every state of the Union to make it their home. Not to gain riches but to enjoy the better things of life. To bask in the life-giving sunshine, to watch the everchanging sunsets of beauty indescribable, to listen to the wind murmuring in the palms, to swim, and play and fish.*

*In a favored section of favored Florida there is a place we know as the Land of Sarasota, on beautiful Sarasota Bay, close by the Gulf of Mexico. It is the story of this land we are going to tell; the story of its ups and downs, its trials and tribulations, its days of happiness and of sorrow. Just the story of the Land of Sarasota—and nothing more.*

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*An aerial view of downtown Sarasota, looking east from Sarasota Bay.*

## CHAPTER 1

### IN THE DAYS OF LONG AGO

A WAVERING WISP of smoke rose lazily into the turquoise sky from behind a dense thicket of palms and cedars on Longboat Key. It rapidly became more dense and blacker. Silhouetted sharply against snowy, wool-pack clouds hanging over the mainland across Sarasota Bay, it was visible for miles.

Minutes later another column of smoke began rising from Terra Ceia Island, far to the north. Then in quick succession other columns arose, up and down the coast, as far as eye could see.

The twisting fingers of smoke were signals. Indian fishermen had spotted De Soto's fleet approaching in the Gulf and they knew the hated Spaniards had returned again to the West Coast of Florida—returned "to expand the Kingdom of God" and, incidentally, to loot, and kill, and torture.

The Indians had good reason to fear the white man. They had been the victims of his cruelty and greed for nearly half a century. Their villages had been ruthlessly destroyed, their temples burned, their fields of maize trampled, and their people brutally enslaved. All this because they did not heed pious ultimatums, delivered in a language they could not understand, to become Christians or be forever damned. Also because they could not hand over gold they did not have.

But perhaps we should not sympathize too much with the Indians or criticize the Spaniards too severely. After all, the Indians were savages. And the Spaniards were no better or no worse than other conquerors of that period—their brutal treatment of the "heathens" here was hardly



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more inhuman than the way heathens were treated elsewhere by the Portuguese and the French, the British and the Dutch. That was the day when European nations were "on the make" and nothing mattered but that their empires be expanded and their coffers enriched. Might made right, everywhere, and little else counted. Perhaps, you may say, much as it does today.

However, all that is beside the point. Let's get back to the story of Sarasota.

### *In Prehistoric Times*

Fossil remains found here indicate that Sarasota got its first "winter visitors" a million years or so ago. That was during the Ice Age, when the great glacier made its slow, inexorable march southward, changing the face of the earth as it moved and annihilating all green and growing things.

Those visitors of the dim and distant past who fled the north in frenzied haste to escape the cold were strange, weird creatures unlike anything on earth today.

Among them were grotesque, ungainly mammoths, serrate-toothed mastadons, amphibious rhinoceres, and two-ton armadillos. Also, giant ground sloths, three-toed horses, pre-historic camels, mammoth beavers, huge rats, and vicious saber-toothed tigers, most ferocious of all the early carnivora.

Uncounted millions of those queer animals came to the Florida peninsula during the great migration and their species vanished, for reasons we do not know, ages before the dawn of civilization. Most of their bodies disintegrated and became part of the soil. But thousands of them sank in swamps, or in the oozing muck of river beds and bays. In the course of time their bones became hardened and fossilized, to endure as conclusive proof that such animals once existed.

Some of the richest fossil beds in the entire state of Florida were found in Sarasota County while drainage ditches were being dug or creek beds dredged. Many of the principal finds have been made by J. E. Moore, of Indian Beach, an ardent student of paleontology. Altogether he has discovered more than 70 fossil species, some of which have not been duplicated anywhere else in the state. Working for years in cooperation with Dr. George Gidley, of the Smithsonian Institution, he helped to bring Sarasota to the attention of scientists throughout the world.

One of Moore's most important finds was the mineralized skeleton of a man which he unearthed May 4, 1929, from the bank of a newly-dug drainage ditch near the head of Phillippi Creek. Paleontologists asserted it was at least 20,000 years old, perhaps much older, and they hailed it as

a discovery of the first magnitude. The skeleton is now in the American Museum of Natural History, in New York City.

Historians, often more conservative than paleontologists, admit that the Phillippi skeleton is indeed ancient. But as for its being 20,000 years old—well, the historians have their fingers crossed. They insist there is nothing "in the record" to indicate that human beings existed in Florida so long ago, at least fourteen millenia before the construction of the first pyramid in Egypt. But who knows? Historians have been wrong before and, in this case, they may be wrong again. Somewhere in Florida soil there may be positive proof that the paleontologists are right. Time alone will tell.

In the meantime, the historians are sitting tight and sticking to their contention that the first human beings came to Florida comparatively recently—say within the past two thousands years or so. Which brings us up to comparatively modern times.

### *A Vanished Race Lived Here*

Centuries before white men realized the New World existed, people we call Indians learned that the Sarasota Bay region was a veritable paradise. Where these aborigines came from, or when, or why, no one knows for sure. But we do know that thousands of them lived here long before the first Spaniard landed on Sarasota's snowwhite beaches.

It is easy to understand why the Indians selected this region for some of their largest settlements. The woods were filled with game and the waters were alive with fish and luscious shell-food. To exist here required a minimum of effort. No wonder the Indians resisted the Spaniards so ferociously when their homeland was invaded!

Mute evidence of the existence of the Indians is furnished by the scores of mounds and kitchen middens which still dot the coast and keys. The mounds were made of sand and earth and were built to serve as places of worship or burial grounds. The kitchen middens, which predominate, are in reality refuse dumps.

At the places where the middens were formed, Sarasota's first inhabitants feasted on clams, oysters and conchs and while they ate, they threw the empty shells away, along with fish bones and the shells of lobsters and crabs. Judging by the size of the middens, and their number, the Indians must have had innumerable toothsome meals. One of the largest and most picturesque of the middens is located on the M. E. Russell property on the bayfront, bordering the south side of Whitaker Bayou.

Up until the time of the big Florida boom, Sarasota boasted of having one of the finest temple mounds in the state. It was located about 100 yards north of Whitaker Bayou, close to the present Tamiami Trail. Cir-

cular in shape, it was about 100 feet in diameter and 35 feet high. Originally it probably was much larger but the rains of centuries undoubtedly had reduced its size. Giant oak trees, hickories, pines and cedars grew out of the mound, indicating its antiquity.

As late as 1920 the mound was unmolested. Then, after Sarasota's population began to swell, a few "pot hunters" started digging in the mound for skeletons, Indian relics and maybe even buried gold. Others followed and by 1925, a large part of the mound had been plundered. Its destruction was completed shortly afterwards by a developer who needed sand and earth to make roads and fills. He put a gang of men and a steam shovel to work—and in a few weeks almost all traces of the mound had disappeared.

A smaller but imposing burial ground almost in the heart of Sarasota met a somewhat similar fate. It was located near the present intersection of Gulf Stream Avenue and Mound Street. It was leveled in the spring of 1920 while a home site was being cleared.

Several feet below the surface workmen found many pieces of pottery, beautifully decorated, and six complete skeletons. The position of the skeletons indicated that the bodies had been buried face downward with their heads pointing southeast. A photograph was taken of the skeletons, a fence was built around the spot, signs were posted warning people to stay out, and a telegram was sent to the Philadelphia Academy of Sciences asking if an expert could be sent to study the findings. But during the night of March 10 vandals broke through the fence and stole most of the bones and relics. What they couldn't take away, they destroyed.

Fortunately, however, many of the mounds in this section have been excavated under scientific direction. As a result, relics have been obtained which are now in museums throughout the country. One of the best collections of Florida artifacts is that possessed by M. E. Tallant, in Bradenton. His findings include, in addition to many splendid pieces of Indian pottery, a beautifully worked Mayan Sun God, made of gold, a creeping alligator and a necklace. A number of metal objects also are contained in the collection, all apparently of Mayan origin.

These Mayan objects support the theory that the Indians living here were visited often by Mayan traders who traveled in huge canoes, stopping at ports along the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea. One of these boats was seen by Columbus. He reported it was almost 100 feet long, had a seven-foot beam and supported twenty-five paddlers, in addition to the trader and his family of seven.

A large mound known as the Englewood Mound, about a half mile south of Englewood close to the shore of Lemon Bay, was excavated in 1934 by Marshall Newman under the direction of Dr. M. W. Stirling,

chief of the Bureau of American Ethnology. In it were found the skeletons of more than 300 persons, many conch shell bowls and numerous pieces of pottery. Every vessel had a small round hole in the bottom. Dr. Stirling said he believed the Indians made the holes to "kill" the vessels and permit their spirits to depart with those of their buried owners.

Measurements taken of the skeletons showed the Indians were short but stocky, with heavy bones. The adult males averaged about five feet six inches in height and the females five feet one. Practically all other Indian skeletons unearthed elsewhere in Sarasota County, as well as in other parts of Florida, were approximately the same size.

These skeletal remains effectively blast the fantastic tales told by early Spanish explorers that the Indians were a race of giants. Perhaps those stories were circulated to furnish an alibi for the Spaniards' failure to subdue the Florida Indians as easily as they had subdued the natives in the West Indies. Anyhow, the Indians here were not giants. They were just normal sized people.

Extremely little is known about those original settlers of Florida. The reasons for this lack of knowledge are simple. The Indians left behind them no written records or architectural remains from which clues regarding their history can be obtained.

Today, after generations of research, authorities still do not agree even on the names of the various tribes or the specific territory each tribe was supposed to occupy. Many of the conclusions of the scholars seem painfully akin to guesswork. And contradictions abound.

Nevertheless, it seems reasonably certain that the Indians who inhabited the Sarasota Bay region when the Spaniards came were members of either the Timucuan or Caloosas tribes. No one knows for sure which of the two tribes predominated. Perhaps it doesn't make much difference. All available information indicates that the two were closely related and seldom waged "unconditional surrender" warfare against each other. Which may prove conclusively they were definitely uncivilized.

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The mystery surrounding the origin of Sarasota's aborigines probably never will be solved. According to one theory, they were Muskhogean who migrated here from Mexico to escape the conquering Aztecs. Another theory is they came here from the West Indies. Still another theory is they came originally from Siberia, by way of the Aleutians and Alaska, and finally landed in Florida after centuries of wandering in the north. Those are the main theories—take your choice and you are likely to be as nearly right as any historian.

As for the time of their coming here—well, that's another secret of the bygone past which may remain a mystery forever. Dead Indians tell no tales—and the Florida Indians have been dead a long, long time.

However, from the confusion of conflicting stories about Sarasota's first inhabitants a few facts stand out.

Those natives, whatever their name might be, were of a light brown hue and stockily built. They lived in thatched palmetto huts in small villages usually located near their temple mounds. They had well organized fisheries and rude industries such as the making of pottery and weapons. They had fields for cultivation of maize, pumpkin, squash and tobacco.

Each tribe had its chief and each village its paracousi or sub chief. The jauvas or Indian priests, who also served as medicine men, had great influence. As worshippers of the sun, the Indians had three great annual feasts: when the corn was planted, when the young ears were ready to eat, and when the crop was harvested. They had their sports, such as wrestling, running and jumping.

Many were gaudily tattooed and all of them seemed to like ornaments, especially pendants made of stone, shell, bones or teeth which they hung around their necks. A few had ornaments made of gold, obtained very likely from Indians of Georgia or Mayan traders. Both men and women wore their hair long. That of the men was drawn to a tight knot on top of the head and used to support feathers and other decorations.

Until the Spaniards came to oppress them, they seemingly were a friendly people who got along well with visitors from other lands. Says Karl A. Bickel in his splendid book, *The Mangrove Coast*: "Undoubtedly over centuries the Florida Indians were in constant contact with the Carib, the Siboney and Arawak Indians of the West Indies, from Cuba and the Bahamas, Haiti and the north coast of South America, too, perhaps. Their language contained so many Carib words that it is probable the West Indian Indians and the Florida Indians could communicate without trouble."

The Florida Indians may have had one great, almost fatal fault. They may have bragged about their native land too much during their contacts with the outlanders.

In all events, word spread through the West Indies that the "island" to

the north called Bimini was a land of the greatest riches. And besides, it was a land wherein there was a fountain whose waters would restore youth to those who bathed in it! Riches—and a fountain of youth to boot!

Followers of Columbus heard these tales of glorious Bimini shortly after they landed in the West Indies. The tales passed from mouth to mouth and lost nothing in the telling. They even reached the court of Spain. The result was exactly what might have been expected. The Spaniards decided to explore and conquer this wondrous land. Such temptation could not be resisted by any country that was conquest bent. Certainly not by Spain.

Explorers, conquistadors and marauders literally paraded up and down the Florida West Coast during the half century following the first voyage of Columbus. We have documents telling of some of the voyages. Other trips were never publicized, simply because they were unauthorized hijacking expeditions, made by men who were "muscling in" on rivals' territory.

There is reason to believe that many of these voyagers came ashore here and explored the back country, looting as they went along.

Longboat Key is a seamount which stands out prominently and voyagers sailing along the coast could hardly have failed to see it. Neither could they have failed to see Big Sarasota Pass. Cartographers say this pass probably was wider and deeper then than now and that Sarasota Bay quite likely was a safe haven for frigates and caravels. If that be true then Sarasota would have been an inviting landing place. So perhaps it is here that many of the first invaders came. Who can say us nay?

Those first white visitors to the West Coast were cruel and ruthless men, intent only on gaining riches and glory—and perhaps a little renewed youthful vigor. But regardless of all that, they were adventurous and daring and romantic—and their names will live in history.

It is essential that a little should be told here about that noted conquistador Hernando de Soto.

Rightly or wrongly, the name of De Soto has been associated with the name Sarasota for more than a hundred years, ever since the first American settler came to this section of the state. The first hotel in Sarasota was named after him; later, stores, and restaurants, and even hot-dog stands. Truly, Sarasota has taken De Soto unto itself.

Perhaps it is mere coincidence that the last two syllables of "Sarasota" should have a marked similarity to the name Soto. On the other hand, who can say positively there is no connection between the two? Stranger things have happened. But we will take up that question of Sarasota's name later.

Aside from the matter of similarity of names there is another import-

ant reason why De Soto figures so prominently in Sarasota's history. He is the first Spaniard who almost certainly set foot on Sarasota soil—others perhaps succeeded him but with them it is a case of "maybe". In De Soto's case, most of the element of doubt has been removed by official government investigation. He's been given the nod—so let's follow suit and give him another.

### *Ambition Brought De Soto Here*

It would be very nice indeed if De Soto could be described as a gallant, benevolent, kindly nobleman inspired by a desire to carry the story of the cross to the red men of Florida. But to do so would be in direct contradiction of the facts. He may have been gallant according to a 16th century definition of the word but certainly he was neither benevolent nor kind. Not if old Spanish writers can be believed. Said one of them: "De Soto was fond of the sport of killing Indians."

If killing Indians was sport, then De Soto had sport galore during his lifetime. His record literally drips with Indian blood.

Born in Estremadura, Spain, about 1499, of an impoverished aristocratic family, De Soto owed his education to the favour of Pedrarias d'Avila, a nobleman of high standing in the court of Spain. In 1519 he accompanied d'Avila on his second expedition to Darien, the southern part of Central America. There, during the next nine years, De Soto won his reputation as a "splendid" Indian killer. His victims totalled thousands. Spanish writers say he was "devoid of mercy."

In 1528 he explored the coast of Guatemala and Yucatan and in 1532 he led 300 volunteers to reinforce Francisco Pizarro in Peru where he played a prominent part in the conquest of the Incas' kingdom and in stealing the Incas' wealth. His cruelties, as reported by Spaniards, were almost unbelievable. But he gained renown as being a great conquistador—and also a princely fortune.

In 1536 he returned to Spain with 180,000 ducats—\$715,500 in present day American money. Now he was able to settle down and live the life of a Spanish grandee. Also, to marry the beautiful and charming Isabella de Bobadilla, daughter of d'Avila. He should have been satisfied. But he wasn't. He was too ambitious. He wanted still more wealth, more power, and a province in the New World he could call his own. A province where he would be the leader who took most of the loot—not a lieutenant who received only a fraction of what the leader got.

De Soto's ambition was whetted by Cabeza de Vaca, one of the four survivors of Narvaez' disastrous expedition. De Vaca had just returned to Spain after eight years of wanderings and the tales he told were enough to drive any ambitious man to distraction. He hinted mysteriously of gold

mines richer than any in Central or South America. After that nothing could restrain De Soto, not even his beautiful Isabella. He made up his mind to succeed where Narvaez had failed and win Florida's riches for himself.

Pulling the right strings in the Spanish court, De Soto obtained from Charles V. on April 20, 1537, a commission as "adelantado of the Lands of Florida" and governor of Cuba. During the following year, he gathered together an army of over 700 men, described as the flower of Spain and Portugal, and outfitted a fleet of nine ships. He sailed from San Lucar November 6, 1538, taking with him his bride Isabella.

The band spent the winter having a gay time in Havana and left there in high spirits May 18, 1539. Isabella stayed behind—to wait and wait, for a husband who never would return.

The ships in De Soto's fleet were heavily loaded when they sailed out of Havana's harbor. In addition to weapons of all kinds and hundreds of ferocious fighting dogs, they carried at least two hundred horses, about fifty hogs and large quantities of nails, tools and even lumber. De Soto had no doubts about finding gold—and he was ready to establish a colony as soon as he found the place where the mines were richest.

One week out of Havana, De Soto sighted Longboat Key. There he came ashore. The date and the spot were established in 1939 after a four year study of the records by the De Soto Expedition Commission, under the chairmanship of Dr. John R. Swanton of the Smithsonian Institution.

"Having fallen four or five leagues below the port and without any of the pilots knowing where the port lay, it was thereupon determined that I should go in the pinnaces and look for it," wrote De Soto in his report to the governor of Santiago. Incidentally, that letter is undoubtedly the first letter ever written with a Florida date line: Espiritu Santo, Florida, July 9, 1539.

After coming ashore on Longboat, De Soto hunted in vain for fresh water and then set out in a pinnace seeking the port selected for him some time before by his advance scout, Juan de Anasco.

He proceeded northward in the Gulf to Longboat Inlet and then cut in to Upper Sarasota Bay which he followed until he reached Tampa Bay. His ships remained out in the Gulf. Night came on and De Soto landed, with the crew of the pinnace, on the mainland near the mouth of the Manatee River on a point where he had seen some Indian huts. They were deserted. The Indians undoubtedly had seen the warning smoke signals and had fled.

The following morning, the channel to the port was located and De Soto rejoined his fleet. The heavily loaded vessels had difficulty making their way through the channel and five days passed before all were anchored

close to the small Indian village of Ucita, believed to have been on Terra Ceia Island, just north of the mouth of the Manatee. From Ucita too the Indians had fled.

A good description of Ucita and the camp the Spaniards established there is furnished by the scribe, the Gentleman of Elvas, a member of De Soto's force:

"The town consisted of seven or eight houses. The chief's house stood near the beach on a very high hill which had been artificially built as a fortress. At the other side of the town was the temple and on top of it a wooden bird with its eyes gilded. Some pearls, spoiled by fire and of little value, were found there. . . . The houses were of wood and were covered with palm leaves."

Elvas went on to say that De Soto and his officers lodged in the chief's house while several smaller buildings were used to store provisions from the ships. The other buildings were destroyed, along with the temple and many small native huts. Dense thickets and towering trees around the village were cut down "for the space of a crossbow-shot in order that the horses might run and the Christians have the advantage of the Indians if the latter should by chance try to attack by night."

All during the summer which followed, De Soto kept hunting—hunting—hunting for the gold mines of his dreams. Up and down the coast and far inland he sent his men. He captured natives and tortured them, hoping to force them to tell where gold could be found. But he learned nothing, simply because the natives had nothing to tell. Indian guides who failed to lead the Spaniards to the fabled mines were thrown to the fighting dogs and killed, despite their screams for mercy.

No doubt De Soto's men came to the Indian village known to have existed at what is now called Indian Beach, close to the temple mound previously mentioned. This village may have been the legendary town of Mococo. The Spaniards probably destroyed it, just as they did all other villages they overran.

By autumn, De Soto had become convinced there were no gold mines in this section of the peninsula. Hoping to get rid of him, some of his captives told him gold could be found at Ocale, near the present city of Ocala. So in November he sent the last of his ships back to Havana and abandoned the camp at Ucita. Before he departed, he burned all the remaining buildings.

Then he started northward, pillaging and destroying as he went along. Many of his men were killed or wounded by the revengeful Indians who lay in ambush along the trails. But the Indians were no match for the Spaniards with their guns, and crossbows, and ferocious fighting dogs, and De Soto pressed on. Into North Florida he went, and then westward,

seeking the gold mines which always were just a few leagues ahead. Behind he left a wide path of destruction discernible half a century later.

Finally he reached the Mississippi. There he died, perhaps of frustrated ambition, on May 21, 1543. His body was buried at night in the muddy water of the river. Sixteen months later, the remnants of his once resplendant army, despondent, ill and weary, finally reached Tampico.

Thus ended the last great expedition made to Florida in search of gold, and silver, and sparkling gems. There were riches in Florida, true enough, but not the kind of riches De Soto sought.

### *What About Sara de Soto?*

Before saying goodbye to De Soto mention must be made of that legendary character Sara de Soto, "daughter" of De Soto, who has been commemorated many years by the people of Sarasota in picturesque pageants.

The legend of Sara, a tragic love story, was first told by Miss Winifred Harper, a school teacher from Ohio who came here for her health shortly after the Civil War and taught the children of William H. Whitaker for several years. Whether Miss Harper originated the story or heard it from pioneers is not known. Karl Bickel says it may have been an old Creek legend. Anyhow, Miss Harper related it to the Whitaker children. They remembered it and passed it down to George F. Chapline, who came here from Clarendon, Ark., as a winter visitor in 1902. Chapline embellished the legend and put it in writing, to become part of the city's lore.

According to the legend, De Soto's men captured a young Indian prince, Chichi-Okobee, "fleet and strong, heir by blood and physical prowess to the thousand teepees and stalwart warriors" of the famous Indian chief, Black Heron. Chichi submitted to bonds because he had beheld Sara, "lovely daughter of De Soto, lovelier than any Indian maiden." He wanted to be near her.

But Chichi fell ill. He lay helpless, "wasting, parching, dying of the fever of the Everglades." The physicians of the Spanish camp tried to cure him, but their efforts failed. They abandoned hope of saving his life. Sara was permitted to minister to him in his dying hour and her tender care wrought a marvel. Chichi recovered. Love's potion, more powerful than any medicines, brought back his health and strength.

Now was the daughter of De Soto taken ill. Again the Spanish physicians were helpless. Chichi begged permission from De Soto to go to his father's camp, deep in the Everglades, to fetch the great medicine man, Ahti, who might save his beloved Sara. Torn with anxiety, De Soto allowed Chichi to depart. The Indian prince sped away as fast as a frightened deer. Never had the tropic trees beheld a human being run so swiftly.

Days later, Chichi returned with the medicine man who gave Sara mysterious herbs, uttered strange incantations to appease the evil spirits of the swamps and kept long vigil at her bedside. Chichi stood mute beyond the camp, his eyes fixed upon the flapping doorway of the sick girl's tent. But all was in vain. Sara died. The Great Spirit had called her.

Broken hearted, Chichi went to De Soto and asked that Sara be buried in Sarasota Bay, the loveliest spot along the sun-kissed shores of Florida. Chichi also begged that he be allowed to take part in the ceremony. De Soto, stricken with grief, gave consent. He permitted Chichi to return to his camp and secure some of his fellow warriors to make up a guard of honor.

The next morning there appeared a hundred Indian braves, headed by Chichi-Okobee. All were bedecked in full war paint; every quiver bristled with stone-tipped arrows; every bow was strung. Three large canoes, draped with the dark mosses of the forest, swept up the beach, paddled by more of Chichi's braves. The body of Sara was tenderly placed in one of the canoes, the funeral barge. In the other two canoes went Chichi and the guard of honor. Slowly the fleet moved to the exact center of Sarasota Bay where Sara's body was lowered gently into the deep.

Then, at a signal from Chichi, every warrior sprang to his feet, tomahawk in hand. In strange, weird unison, the hundred braves chanted a funeral dirge. As its mystery-laden echo died away in the depths of the forest along the bay, the blades of a hundred tomahawks crashed into the frail canoes. A moment of ripple. A moment of bubbles. And all was still. Chichi and his companions-at-arms had gone to guard the resting place of the beautiful Spanish maiden in the clear, blue waters of Sarasota Bay.

That is the legend of Sara de Soto. And a very pretty legend it is indeed, well worth preserving, despite the fact that it cannot be verified in any particular. According to available records, no women accompanied De Soto's expedition. Furthermore, there is nothing to indicate he had a daughter named Sara—nothing that can be found in the countless reference books of the Library of Congress, in Washington.

A search through the library's records, made in September, 1945, by a member of the library's staff, Nelson R. Burr, showed that De Soto was married to Isabella de Bobodilla on or about November 25, 1536, just two and one-half years before he came to Florida.

"As for De Soto's children," Burr reported, "the subject is somewhat obscured by the haze that hangs over the extra-marital amours of a considerable number of Spanish conquistadors. Reference books state that in Peru, De Soto took as his mistress an Indian widow, by whom he had a

daughter, Leonora, who is reported to have been living in Cuzco as late as 1580. . . .

"The explorer's will, drawn up in Cuba on May 10, 1539, mentions a boy 'who they say is my son, called Andres de Soto,' and his illegitimate daughter Maria, wife of Hernan Nieto in Nicaragua. There is no mention of children by his legal wife, Isabella."

Despite all that, the story of Sara de Soto is a good one. And, who can say positively it isn't true? So let's permit Sara to rest in peace—in the depths of beautiful Sarasota Bay, where Chichi-Okobee and his valiant warriors can guard her until the end of time.

#### *True Christians Followed De Soto*

After the fiasco of De Soto's expedition, no more conquistadors, fired with a lust for gold, came to the Sarasota Bay region or anywhere else along the West Coast. Why waste human life and get nothing in return?

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Beaches of the Land of Sarasota present countless scenes of striking beauty.

But Florida was not forgotten by the Spaniards. Forts had to be established on the peninsula to prevent the French and the British from getting a foothold here. Besides, the Spanish trade routes must be protected. Altogether too much treasure from Mexico and Peru was being lost in shipwrecks along the coasts—treasure which could not be recovered because of the hostile Indians. So expeditions were sent from Spain to establish colonies here and erect forts.

Missionaries of the Jesuit, Dominican and Franciscan orders also came to Florida. These men were true Christians. They differed from the conquistadors in every way. They were humble and considerate; not arrogant and cruel. They taught Christianity by kindly deeds, not by brutality. They were good men, sincere in their belief and also brave.

Such a man was Luis de Cancer Barbastro, more commonly known as Father Cancer. Accompanied by three other priests, he sailed from Vera Cruz in 1549, intent upon founding a mission in the Tampa Bay region. It is believed that his ship, which carried neither arms nor soldiers, anchored in Sarasota Bay.

The Indians had no way of knowing that Father Cancer and his companions were totally unlike the marauders, slavehunters and conquistadors who had preceded them. So they took no chances. When Father Cancer landed on the beach and knelt in prayer, the Indians beat him to death. Two other priests were captured. The ship returned to Mexico.

It has always been believed that the two captured priests were killed. However, there is a bare possibility their lives may have been spared and they lived to establish a mission, unknown to the rest of the world.

Pioneer settlers say they remember seeing the remains of a stone-walled building, which might have been built by the missionaries, in Cherokee Park close to the bay. About two feet of the walls were still standing a half century ago; but the walls crumbled away and now all trace of the building has vanished. With its disappearance went all hope of ever solving the mystery surrounding its construction.

The tragic fate of Father Cancer did not deter other missionaries from attempting to spread the gospel on the Florida West Coast. Old Spanish records indicate that missions were established at Tocabaga, near the head of Tampa Bay, and at several other places which have not yet been definitely located. Quite possibly the missionaries visited Indian villages along Sarasota Bay. But whether they succeeded in converting any of the Indians here is purely a matter of conjecture. The records are silent.

Elsewhere on the peninsula the mission settlements were centers of great activity, according to W. T. Cash, Florida state historian. In his excellent work, *The Story of Florida*, he writes: "The priests introduced the culture of the orange and also the pomegranate and fig. The red men

were taught improved methods of agriculture. Cattle and hogs were introduced and the red men learned the great food value of these animals. It is said that the scrub cattle of Florida had as their ancestors cattle from Andalusia in Spain."

But there is a darker side to the picture. As a result of contacts with the white man, the once mighty tribes of Indians began to decline. Annals of the West Coast record an epidemic of smallpox which swept the West Coast and took thousands of lives. Other diseases took their toll and the native race rapidly began to slip from the pages of history. By the dawn of the nineteenth century, the tribes encountered by the early Spaniards had vanished or had been absorbed by other tribes.

Thereafter we hear of no Indians other than the Seminoles, in whose veins flows the blood of Georgian Creeks and escaped negro slaves. And perchance the blood of philandering Spaniards. A mixed race, true enough, but a race of fierce fighters, as the Americans learned during the long and bloody Seminole War.

### *The Mystery of "Sarasota"*

Sarasota has a melodic name which rolls off the tongue easily and once heard is long remembered. It's also an intriguing name—one which has aroused the curiosity of researchers for generations. Countless hours have been spent delving through musty archives in attempts to learn the name's origin and meaning. But nothing has been gained except a confusion of inconclusive explanations.

Waterfront legend has it that old Spanish charts, made about 1750, showed a fishing camp and Indian trading post called Saraxola at the north end of Longboat Key. It's known that itinerant Spanish and Cuban fishermen maintained fishing camps in this vicinity for more than a century before the coming of Americans. However, that Saraxola name is legend and nothing more—if it was ever given on any chart, that chart has disappeared and no definite record of it is available.

So far as is known, the name first appears, with slightly different spelling, on the Elino de la Puente map of 1768. Here Sarasota is designated as Porte Sarasote. The Bernard Romans map of 1774 gives the name of the bay as Boca Sarazota. A map issued by Laurie and Whittle in 1794 marks the place as Sara Zota.

Early in the nineteenth century American usage slurred the name to Sarasota and it was so carried on the first "complete" map of Florida printed by the government in 1839. This map was prepared for Brigadier General Zackary Taylor by United States topographical engineers at "Headquarters of the Army of the South at the Military Reservation of Fort Brooke," located at the present site of Tampa.

A priceless copy of this map, owned by A. B. Edwards, impartially gives two spellings for Sarasota—the bay is given with one “r” and the pass with two “r’s”. Anna Maria Key was designated by the surveyors as Long Island, Longboat Key was shown as Palm Island, and Siesta Key was called Clam Island. None of the rivers and creeks along the West Coast were shown accurately.

Later government maps, prepared with more care, used Sarasota in naming Upper Sarasota Bay, Little Sarasota Bay, Little Sarasota Pass, Big Sarasota Pass, and Sarasota Key, now known as Siesta Key.

The earliest settlers along the bay said they lived at Sarasota, long before the town of Sarasota was born. Also before the town came into existence, the name was given to the community’s first post office, called Sara Sota, established August 16, 1878, with Charles E. Abbe as postmaster. The actual town of Sarasota came into being late in 1885 with the coming of the Scotch colonists. The county of Sarasota, split from Manatee County, was created July 1, 1921.

So much for the use of the name. The record is fairly clear in that respect. But when it comes to the name’s origin and meaning—well, that’s something else again. Even the best scholars are baffled when they attempt to solve the mystery surrounding the name.

*The Florida Guide*, published in 1939, states that Sarasota “is possibly a corruption of the Spanish expressions, ‘sarao sota’, meaning ‘place of dancing’.” But Julien C. Yonge, editor of the *Florida Historical Quarterly*, says this explanation “seems quite out of the question.”

Continuing, Yonge says: “In the Gauld chart of 1794, based on Gauld’s surveys of a much earlier date, there is a note at the Sarasota inlet: ‘Here are remarkable palms.’ The Spanish ‘soto’ means grove, clump, thicket. It is possible there is some connection here.”

The same possible explanation is offered by Robert C. Gooch, chief of the general reference and bibliography division of the Library of Congress, who says: “The spelling and pronunciation of the word resemble Spanish far more than Indian words. There are some Spanish words which might apply: for example, zarzosa, meaning briery, and soto, meaning a thicket or grove. Possibly at the time of discovery the site was thickly overgrown.”

Another explanation is cautiously advanced by Yonge: “Some of the early maps double the ‘r’. The Spanish ‘sarro’ means ‘crust or incrustation on vessels’. Vessels in these waters must be scraped regularly. In the early maps of Pensacola Bay a certain place on the bay is labelled ‘careening place’.” Yonge added that the name “might well be from some man’s name.”

Linking these two thoughts together we get the idea that De Soto might have sent some of his ships here to be scraped and that henceforth

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Proof that the Land of Sarasota was inhabited by Indians long before the coming of the white man was furnished by shell mounds which formerly dotted the coast line.

the bay became known as the careening place of Soto. Far fetched? Probably so, but who can say such an explanation isn't possible?

Mrs. Edna Mosely Landers advances this theory: "Spanish explorers who passed this section of the West Coast noted the presence of white sand Indian mounds which were on the level with the vegetation. From a distance the whole looked flat and is said to have reminded the explorers of the Sahara. Over a period of time, this name might have been abbreviated to Sara. The suffix comes from the Indian word 'zota' meaning clear, blue, limpid, beautiful. What more logical than that the 'zota' was added to the Sahara and the two eventually became first Sarazota and then the present Sarasota?"

Nathan Mayo, in explaining the origin of Florida county names, says this of Sarasota: "From the Indian word applied to a prominent feature in the shoreline, known as Point of Rocks, extending into the Gulf near Crescent Beach." The Indian word referred to by Mayo probably was Sara-se-cota, meaning a landfall easily observed.

Another writer, identity unknown, said the name probably was Cara Sota originally. He insisted that the word "cara" means taking the initiative against the enemy and, linked with Soto, the combination means that Soto landed here despite the opposition of hostile enemies.

Another unidentified writer says: "The name is derived from the Indian words: 'sua', the sun; 'ha', water, and 'zota', the shadow—literally denoting the fleecy intense brightness of the 'cumuli', billowy clouds, which Indian fancy suggested as shadows cast by the sun itself. Thus interpreted, the name means 'water of the white sun shadows'."

Those are the explanations of the meaning of Sarasota. Does any of them satisfy you? Probably not. But, anyhow, you must admit that Sarasota has a fascinating name. And so far as many residents of Sarasota are concerned they probably will insist until their dying day that the name is linked, somehow or other, with that of the Spanish conquistador they call their own—Hernando de Soto.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE FIRST SETTLERS COME

BIG STORIES regarding Florida broke during the late summer of 1842. Had there been "modern" newspapers in those days, a century ago, the stories would have been smashed on the front pages with screaming headlines: SEMINOLE WAR ENDS! . . . CONGRESS OPENS SOUTH FLORIDA!

The news came as a tonic to the people of North Florida who had been hard hit by the collapse of wildcat banks in Tallahassee and Pensacola following the panic of 1837. With the Seminoles vanquished and South Florida opened to settlers, lost fortunes might be recouped. And new fortunes made. At the very least, fine homesteads acquired. Good news indeed!

The Seminole War had been long and bloody. Starting with the Dade Massacre December 28, 1835, it had lasted seven years and cost the lives of more than sixteen hundred American regulars and volunteers. To say nothing of \$40,000,000 of federal funds.

But finally on August 14, 1842, General W. J. Worth announced that the last of the Seminoles had been killed, banished to the West, or driven into reservations in the Everglades. Less than four hundred remained in the entire state. Now, said the general, South Florida was safe—or almost safe—for settlers.

As a further incentive to rapid development of the Seminole's lost empire, Congress on August 4, 1842, passed the Armed Occupation Act. This act stipulated that six months' provisions and 160 acres of land, anywhere south of Palatka and Gainesville, would be given to settlers willing to carry arms to defend their homes for five years. And additional land could be bought for \$1.25 an acre! Truly strong inducements. So the southward trek began.

The migration extended far down into Central Florida and along both coasts. The pioneers traveled in covered wagons, hauled by mules or oxen, or in sloops and schooners when headed for the coastal regions. Scores of new communities sprang up in the wilderness. Among the first of these was the infant village of Manatee, on the banks of the Manatee River.

Late in 1841, a hotel keeper at Fort Brooke named Josiah Gates was tipped off by high army officers that Congress was considering and undoubtedly would pass the Armed Occupation Act. They also told him the end of the Seminole War was only months away.

A man of foresight, Gates knew that when the government's vast acreage would be released for settlement there would be a great influx of new settlers into this region. So he made up his mind to get in on the ground floor and lay claim to a choice parcel of land before the rush began. He confided his plans to a friend, Captain Frederick Tresca, owner of the sloop *Margaret Ann*, who knew every foot of the coast between Cedar Keys and Key West. Tresca advised him to go to the Manatee River section, one of the most beautiful spots in Florida. The captain even offered to take Gates on a cruise from the fort down Tampa Bay to the place he praised.

As they sailed up the Manatee River, Gates noticed a lone pine tree, a marker, he was told, to a once famous Indian village. Landing, Gates followed a narrow path to a gushing spring with a circular pool twelve feet in diameter, "which for countless ages had lured tribal warriors with their painted bodies, their weird dances and mysterious ceremonies."

Following a narrow trail through the dense forest for about a mile, Gates and his companions came upon a five-acre field which apparently had been abandoned recently by the Seminoles. Corn stalks were still standing and a few pumpkins were still on the vines. Seeing the advantage of having even a couple of acres ready for cultivation, Gates selected his quarter section to include this field.

Gates returned to Fort Brooke and in January, 1842, brought his family to the homesite he had chosen. He also brought his eight negro slaves. Quickly the slaves built a six-room cabin, with a passage way and detached kitchen. The "Gates House", designed to be used as a hotel—a hotel in the wilderness—was ready for business. And none too soon. During the following year more than a dozen families settled along the Manatee and the Gates House was always filled with guests.

Many of these newcomers were "common folk" who had never owned land before and were determined to get homesteads of their own while they had the chance. A few were descendants of wealthy southern families who had lost large plantations in North Florida during the depression following the bank failures.

Included among these "aristocrats" were the Braden brothers, Hector W. Braden and Dr. Joseph Braden, who built the famous Braden Castle, the ruins of which are still standing; Major Robert Gamble, builder of the Gamble Mansion, now a state shrine belonging to the Florida United Daughters of the Confederacy, and Colonel William Wyatt, who later became the grandfather of the first white child born in what is now Sarasota County, Nancy Catherine Stuart Whitaker. All these men bought large tracts of land from the government, paying \$1.25 an acre.

The Bradens brought with them eighty slaves to till the 1,100 acres

which they acquired. Gamble had a hundred slaves to work his plantation of 3,450 acres. Slaves also were owned by Pinckney Craig and his brother John William Craig, whose plantation adjoined Gamble's.

Sugar cane was the principal crop of the plantation owners. Within a short time there were refineries on both sides of the river. Production of sugar and molasses was Manatee's biggest industry until just before the Civil War. Then it disappeared—never to return.

The Manatee River section has a fascinating history. But we cannot tell it here because this is the story of Sarasota, Manatee's next door neighbor.

However, before we drop down coast to Sarasota Bay we should give the names of a few more of Manatee's pioneers. Some of them figure prominently in Sarasota's history; others have descendants here. So here's a partial list: Henry Smith Clark, Elbridge Ware, Michael Ledwith, Samuel Reed, Ezekial Glazier, John Jackson, Simon Turmon, Joseph Atzeroth, Christian and Harry Peterson, Edward Snead, Thomas Kenny, the Rev. Edmond Lee, Dr. Franklin Branch, Casin Cooper, William Lockwood, Oval Bushnell, Captain Archibald McNeil, the Rev. J. K. Glover, and the Vanderipe, Cunliffe and Hayes families, original developers of the Braden River section. There the list must stop because we haven't space to give them all. Sarasota calls.

### *Sarasota Gets a Settler*

Spanish conquistadors came to Sarasota in search of gold, and silver and precious gems. They found nothing to satisfy their greed and they departed, disheartened and disillusioned.

Three centuries later young Bill Whitaker, then just 21 years old, came here in search of a "dream spot" where he could settle down and make his home. He found exactly what he was looking for—a homesite on a bluff from which beautiful Sarasota Bay could be seen in all its splendor. Fertile land he also found, and forests filled with game and waters teeming with fish. What more could a man ask for? So young Bill stayed—to become Sarasota's founder.

William H. Whitaker—to give "young Bill" his full name—had led an adventurous life. Born in Savannah, Ga., August 1, 1821, he left home when 14 years old, shortly after his father had taken unto himself another wife, a year after Bill's mother died.

Bill had no fancy for his new stepmother, so, early one morning he packed his clothes and slipped out of the house. He thought he had made a clean getaway but just as soon as he opened the gate, leading out onto Whitaker avenue, his father spied him and asked where he was going. No excuses possible, Bill told him he was running away. His father did not try

to change Bill's mind. He knew his son had been dissatisfied, so he gave him all the money he had in his pocket and a large key-wind gold watch. He advised him to go to Tallahassee and live with his half-brother, Hamlin Valentine Snell, a young and prospering attorney in the territorial capital.

But Bill had other plans. He liked Ham Snell—liked him fine—even though he considered him quite an old fellow—all of 25 years! Perhaps later on he would go to visit him. But right now Bill wanted to step out and see the world. So he headed for Savannah's docks to seek a job on an outbound ship. Bill was young but he was strong and wiry and in less than an hour he was hired as a deckhand on a trading schooner just leaving for Key West.

Where young Whitaker went during the following year, or what he saw, has never been recorded. But it's known that in the summer of 1836 he was a fisherman at St. Marks. There Snell encountered him one day. He persuaded Bill to go to Tallahassee with him and "get a little schooling." Rather reluctantly, Bill agreed.

Back in Tallahassee, Snell asked his friend, Furman Chaires, owner of a large plantation, to allow Bill to live at his home while attending a nearby private school. Chaires had a son Bill's age and the two youths became close friends. It was this bond which kept adventure-hungry Bill "chained to his desk" for two long years. But that was all Bill could stand. The Seminole War was being waged and Bill made up his mind to take a hand in conquering the Indians. That would truly be adventure!

Four years of Indian fighting followed. Youngster Bill matured—his love of adventure was almost satisfied. So when the war was over, Bill returned to Tallahassee to "talk things over" with half-brother Snell. He wanted to settle down—to have a home he could call his own. What better time than this to start, with the Seminoles conquered and the government offering 160 acres to able-bodied settlers? But how was he to get to South Florida? That was the hitch—the problem Bill didn't know how to solve.

Snell solved it for him. He agreed to back young Bill in the pioneering expedition. What's more, he decided to go along with his half-brother, just to have a vacation. Why not? Once prosperous Tallahassee was in the doldrums. The debacle of the Union Bank of Commerce had left many of Snell's clients penniless and his law practice was almost non-existent. Besides, many of Snell's friends already had headed southward—the Bradens, Gamble, Wyatt and many others. Why not go down the coast and visit them, and also help young Bill get settled?

Snell bought a staunch, seaworthy sloop which he named *Lovinia* in memory of his mother, who also was the mother of young Whitaker by her second marriage. Next, Snell bought all kinds of tools needed by pioneers

and nearly a ton of provisions. The sloop was loaded and late in November, 1842, Whitaker and Snell left St. Marks.

They sailed leisurely southward along the coast, looking for a place which would be ideal for a homesite. They found nothing by the time they reached Manatee. So they stopped a few days at the Gates House, visiting old friends. From them they learned of good land in the Sarasota Bay region which had not yet been taken up by settlers. They started off again and during the afternoon of December 14, while sailing south through Sarasota Bay, they sighted a place on the mainland where there were high yellow bluffs.

Letting down sail, they drifted into the mouth of a small, palm-fringed bayou a few hundred yards north of the bluff. Landing, they found many things to show that Indians had lived here for generations. Just north of the bayou there was a high temple mound and the whole region was dotted with burial grounds and ancient kitchen middens.

A short way up the bayou, on the east bank, they found a pool of fresh water, fed by crystal water pouring forth out of rocks in a steady stream. The ground around the spring was hard-packed. Indians undoubtedly had gotten their water here for countless years. Whitaker tested the water—it was good. In a nearby slough, alligators grunted—but alligators were no novelty to young Whitaker. He had seen thousands of them during the Indian war.

The next day, Whitaker and Snell explored the neighborhood. A quarter mile up the coast they met a Spanish fisherman named Alzartie living in a crude palmetto shack. In halting English, Alzartie told them that fish and game were abundant and that a man settling here would want for nothing. Several Cuban fishermen, then squatting on Longboat Key, told them they thought this section unsurpassed anywhere on the West Coast.

The dense vegetation was proof that the land was fertile. The view from the yellow bluffs was magnificent. Whitaker and Snell decided to look no farther. Here, at yellow bluffs, was the ideal spot for a homeseeker to settle.

Getting tools from the sloop, the men quickly built two palmetto huts, one to serve as a temporary home and the other to store their provisions. This done, they proceeded to build a log cabin, using cedar logs which they rafted across the bay from Longboat Key, then covered with a dense cedar forest. A detached kitchen with a "scaffold stove" was also built.

When the home was finished, spring had come and Snell decided he would have to return to Tallahassee. He had been vacationing long enough. Now it was time to go back and rebuild his depression-shattered law practice. Young Whitaker was left to work out his destiny single-handed.

But in the years which followed, Snell returned many times to the Whitaker place. He was here so often, in fact, that government surveyors, who surveyed the Sarasota Bay region in 1847, labelled the home on yellow bluffs "Snell's House." They also called the bayou running through the property "Snell's Bayou." The bayou bore this name on government maps as late as 1914, long after it has become known locally as Whitaker's Bayou.

Whitaker received a deed from the United States government for his homestead, embracing 144.81 acres, on September 1, 1851. On May 15, 1852, he purchased from the government an additional 48.63 acres, fronting on the bay, for \$1.25 an acre. This was the tract where Alzardie lived; when he returned to Cuba he assigned his squatter's rights to it over to his "good friend Bill." In this manner Whitaker acquired a total of 193.44 acres—one of the finest properties in all Florida, with a frontage on the bay of more than a mile, extending from the present Payne Terminal north to 33rd street.

Today, Whitaker's bayfront property—if still held intact—would truly be worth a fortune. But a century ago, no land in this region, no matter how fertile, was worth any more than \$1.25 an acre. So Whitaker could not sell his holdings and live thereafter in ease and comfort. He had to work for a living—and work hard! That's exactly what he did.

### *Bill Whitaker Gets Ahead*

Whitaker made his first money by selling dried salt mullet and dried roe to Cuban traders who sailed up and down the coast.

He had no difficulty catching the fish. During the winter months the bay literally churned with them. They came in immense schools, more than a mile long and hundreds of yards wide—so dense it seemed as though a person could walk upon them. Often when coming through Sarasota Pass, the schools would be pursued by sharks or porpoises. In frenzied efforts to escape, the mullet would leap high in the air and make a weird, uncanny noise which old-timers say sounded like the roar of heavy surf breaking on the beach. At times this roar could be heard more than four miles inland.

When the schools were running, Whitaker could take a cast net and fill his boat in a few minutes. That was easy. The real work followed—cleaning the fish, salting them thoroughly, and then placing them on racks to dry. After a few days, when they had become as "hard as boards", they were stored in hand-made crates until the Cubans came to buy them.

The traders paid a handsome price for the mullet—all of one cent a fish! But pennies were not to be scorned in those pioneering days. A thousand dried mullet brought \$10, and with \$10 many things could be purchased. So Whitaker managed to get along very nicely.

In the beginning, Whitaker did most of the fishing single-handed. But in 1844, he went into "partnership" with his first American neighbor, Joseph Woodruff, who came here from Charleston, S. C., and settled in a palmetto shack on the bay about a mile north of Yellow Bluffs.

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The crystal clear waters of Myakka River reflect the beauty of its palm-fringed shores.

With Woodruff to help him, Whitaker more than quadrupled his output of dried fish. His income increased and he began to accumulate a little money. By 1847 he had enough capital to extend his activities and go into the cattle raising business. He went to Dade City on horseback and purchased ten cows and calves. He brought them back over the first "road" cut through the wilderness south of Tampa. It wasn't much of a road—its "construction" consisted only of blazing trees and cutting away the underbrush and making passable fords across the streams and rivers. But it was better than no road at all, so Whitaker used it.

The ten cows and calves brought back by Whitaker formed the nucleus of the famous '47 herd which roamed the open range of the Myakka region for many years. The brand "47" was known by every cattleman in all South Florida. Money obtained from the sale of cattle later helped Whitaker in giving his brood of children good educations.

Whitaker is credited with having planted the first orange grove in the entire Manatee River—Sarasota Bay region. He got the seeds from oranges brought by Cuban traders. He planted them and when they sprouted, cared for the small trees painstakingly. They flourished and before ten years passed, Whitaker had a bearing grove. It's reported that the quality of the fruit was even finer than many of the varieties now on the market. But perhaps that's just "old timers' exaggeration."

As stated before, Snell returned to the Whitaker home many times during the '40s. During one of his visits, Snell took time out to make a trip to Cuba on one of the traders' boats. He brought back guava seeds and planted them, thus introducing guavas into the state. Some people think this was a great thing for Florida—but others argue that the state would have been just as well off without the noisome fruit. A story is told of a tourist who shipped a box of guavas north to a friend. The friend told the expressman he expected a box of guavas and asked to be notified when the shipment arrived. A day or so later the expressman called and said: "Your guava has come but I think it's dead!" . . . But that is definitely digressing.

In 1846 and again in 1848, the sturdiness of Bill Whitaker's cedar log cabin at Yellow Bluffs was severely tested by two of the worst hurricanes which ever swept the West Coast of Florida.

An interesting account of the '46 hurricane was written later by the Rev. Edward Franklin Gates, eldest son of Manatee's first settler. The storm began October 14, wrote the Reverend Gates, and was "preceeded by an unusual phenomena—rapidly flying scuds of clouds seemingly but a short distance above the earth. Moving in mixed confusion were sea birds migrating in great numbers to the islands. Conspicuous among them were the forked-tail man o' war or frigate birds which were taken as sure indications of an approaching storm.

"The hurricane swept down the river from a northeasterly direction with all its fury, uprooting trees, mowing down fences like grass, and blowing down houses and causing much misery and distress, reaching its climax sometime between midnight and dawn."

The vicious winds blew most of the water out of Tampa Bay, Gates said, leaving only a few holes or basins of water here and there with a narrow channel down the center. Less than four feet of water remained in even the deepest parts of Manatee River. To prove the shallowness of

the water, Josiah Gates rode horseback across the river and didn't even get his boots wet.

Down at Sarasota Bay, Bill Whitaker weathered out the storm and suffered no loss. But he was not so fortunate in the '48 hurricane, described by pioneers as the "granddaddy of all hurricanes." The storm began Saturday, September 22. This time the wind came with destructive force from the southwest, pushing the water of the Gulf toward land. All the keys along the coast were inundated. Ships were washed ashore and smashed to pieces by the angry waves. The newly-built lighthouse on Egmont Key was blown down.

Whitaker's cabin, which faced the open bay, felt the full force of the roaring winds. He later told his children: "I didn't believe I would live through the night. The logs in the wall groaned as though they were in agony. Every minute I thought they would tumble down upon me. But the cabin stood. Only the roof was damaged and I repaired that easily."

However, the storm cost Whitaker heavily. Out on Longboat Key he had left many of his nets on a sandy beach. Next morning, after the wind had subsided, Whitaker looked out across the bay to see whether his nets were safe. Not a trace of them could be seen. They were never found and Whitaker had to make new ones, a long, tedious and expensive task.

The sandy beach where Whitaker had kept his nets disappeared in the hurricane. At that spot there was now open water. A new pass through the key had been formed and that's what Whitaker named it—New Pass. It has borne that name ever since.

The hurricane was disastrous to mariners but it was not altogether a tragedy for settlers along the coast. In the wreckage of the smashed ships, and strewn along the beaches, the settlers found much valuable merchandise. It's related that one pioneer found a complete set of mahogany furniture, enough for a large home. Pieces of this furniture are reported to be still in use in Sarasota homes today.

It's also reported that scores of barrels of fine-quality whiskey were washed ashore during the storm. Inasmuch as practically everyone drank in those days, even ministers, the whiskey did not go to waste.

The winds of the '48 hurricane had hardly died down when Bill Whitaker experienced another storm—an emotional storm! He fell in love. Head over heels in love with a little, black-haired, blue-eyed girl in Manatee—a wisp of a lass, barely five feet tall, who tipped the scales at exactly eighty pounds. But pretty as all get-out—and full of spirit. She was Mary Jane Wyatt—a remarkable girl who became a remarkable woman. She well deserves special mention.

*Mary Jane — A "Lady Pioneer"*

There's no question but that Mary Jane Wyatt was a spoiled little miss. No wonder. She was the youngest child of Colonel William Wyatt and his wife Mary, who pioneered in Manatee in 1842. Her two older brothers, Hance and William, and her father idolized her. They granted her every wish. When Bill Whitaker began courting her, he was warned by Hance: "Better watch out, Bill, she's used to having her own way." Bill replied: "That's all right with me—she can go on having it—a girl as pretty as she is should have everything she wants."

Mary Jane was born in Tallahassee April 11, 1831. At that time her father was one of the wealthiest men in the South. He also was a power in politics. In 1838 he ran for the office of governor of the territory and lost by only one vote. In that same year, he lost his plantation, most of his slaves, and much of his wealth when the Union Bank suspended specie payment and foreclosed mortgages right and left.

But shrewd Colonel Wyatt had cached \$30,000 in the Bank of New Orleans. Perhaps he had other deposits elsewhere. Anyhow, he was far from broke. So when he came to Manatee with his family to make a new start in life, he didn't have to worry about where the family's next meal was coming from. He brought many slaves along with him and his plantation became one of the finest along the Manatee.

While in Tallahassee, Mary Jane attended a private school. When the family came to the Manatee wilderness, her education was not neglected. For several years she was taught by a private tutor and then she was sent to a girl's seminary near Louisville, Ky. There she received the "polish" needed by a Southern lady in ante bellum days.

While in Kentucky, Mary Jane became ill and when she returned home in the spring of 1850 her father sent her to his ranch eight miles from their home to spend the summer with her brothers and regain her health. There she learned to ride horseback and herd cattle. She also learned how to swim, and row a tree-trunk canoe, and shoot a rifle. Bragged her father: "She can pick off a turkey at a hundred yards and never touch a feather on its body save its head."

When Mary returned to her Manatee home in the fall she was as strong and brown-skinned as a Seminole maiden. It was then Bill Whitaker started courting her in earnest. He visited her home several times a week, thinking nothing of the long fifteen-mile ride between Yellow Bluffs and Manatee. 'Tis said he wore a path through the woods to win her hand. But win it he did, after two years of ardent wooing. Mary Jane finally consented to be his bride and they were married June 10, 1851, in the Methodist Church of Manatee. It was the first wedding in all Manatee County.

Down to the cedar cabin at Yellow Bluffs came the newly-weds. With no neighbors within miles, it was a lonely place for a young bride. But she loved her pioneer husband and they were happy.

At Yellow Bluffs on April 19, 1852, there was born the first white child in what is now Sarasota County—Nancy Catherine Stuart Whitaker, a tiny tot with red, curly hair who grew up to become the belle of Sarasota. "Nancy was given all those names," says Mrs. Gertrude Higel, granddaughter of the Whitakers, "because her parents didn't expect to have another child. But fate decreed otherwise. They had ten more children during the next fourteen years. And it wasn't long before they began running out of names."

During the four years following the birth of Nancy, the Whitaker family prospered. The '47 herd of cattle increased in size and fishing was good. Now, when the Cuban traders came, they could get full loads when they anchored at the mouth of Whitaker Bayou. And after each shipment, the Whitakers' little horde of Spanish doubloons became a little larger. Their gardens flourished and their orange grove bore an abundance of fruit. The pioneers' home in the Sarasota wilderness was well established.

But then came disaster—swift and sudden.

### *Indians on the Warpath*

Deep in the Big Cypress Swamp, Billy Bowlegs was the proud owner of a banana patch. The stalks were fifteen feet high and the fruit was delicious. The patch was Billy's choicest possession—and because of it, the fires of Indian war flared in Florida again after thirteen years of peace.

Billy, chief of the small band of Seminoles which had been driven into the reservation in 1842, was well known to settlers along the coast. A proud, black-haired, stocky man, he came here often, sometimes to trade and other times to visit with the pioneers and enjoy a meal with them.

Mary Wyatt Whitaker knew him well. She met him first during the summer of 1850 while roughing it at her father's ranch. She talked with him about his tribesmen and they became quite friendly. "If your people ever fight us again, Billy," asked Mary one day, "would you come back and kill us?" "Oh yes, kill," was the answer, "but kill easy."

Mary did not take Billy seriously. She knew Billy realized his band of a hundred Seminole braves would have no chance against the whites. She also knew he was a peace-loving man and wanted only to be left to live in peace. So no one was more surprised than Mrs. Whitaker when she learned, early in 1856, that Billy Bowlegs and his warriors were again on the warpath.

White man's orneriness was the direct cause of the uprising.

Officials of the Land Office in Washington decreed that the Big Cypress country should be surveyed. The army was ordered to cooperate and Lieutenant George Hartsoff with a party of ten men left Ft. Myers to help establish the lines. Then, just a week before Christmas, 1855, Hartsoff's crew ran across Billy Bowleg's banana patch.

"Let's tear the hell out of it and see what Billy does," yelled one of the men. The others thought it was a fine idea. So they trampled down the banana stalks, smashed the pumpkins growing nearby and uprooted the potatoes. Soon afterward, Billy returned. He was grief stricken. And when he demanded compensation, Hartsoff's men laughed uproariously. Boy, what a joke! To make it even better, they tripped Billy and sent him sprawling. When he arose, his flat, round face was covered with dirt. Then the whole camp roared. This surely was grand sport. Seething with anger, Billy left.

But in the early hours of the day before Christmas, Billy returned. With him came a band of Seminole warriors, smeared with war paint, determined to right the injustice which had been done. They attacked Hartsoff's camp, suddenly, without warning. In the skirmish which followed, Hartsoff and four of his men were seriously wounded. Perhaps it's a shame the Seminoles didn't polish off the whole crew. But the army men were too well-trained and too well-armed and they finally escaped.

Once aroused, the Seminoles lost all reason. Small bands of them struck out in the "white man's country," pillaging, shooting, burning as they went. One group reached the Manatee River and the home of Dr. Braden—Braden's Castle, on the night of February 27. A kitchen-maid saw one of the Indians skulking in the shadows and screamed. Lights were blown out and shutters fastened. The Seminoles attacked the house but were driven off. They vanished into the dark, taking with them eleven slaves and three of the doctor's mules.

The settlement shook with excitement—and fear. Messengers were sent out into the country, warning people to come in for safety. They swarmed in from all directions. Doctor Branch's home near the mineral springs was thrown open as a place of refuge. Its already heavy stockade was reinforced. Soon the doctor's house was crowded and the late arrivals went to the Braden Castle.

Among the refugees who found safety in Branch's Fort were Mrs. Whitaker, her daughter Nancy, and the baby, Louise Anstie, born December 31, 1853.

Bill Whitaker, named captain of a company of volunteers, set out for a military camp on Peace Creek, seventy miles away, to get help. While he was gone, another band of Seminoles raided his home on Yellow Bluffs, burning it to the ground.

In this raid there was killed the first "tourist" who ever came to the Land of Sarasota—George Owen, a young man from Philadelphia who was suffering from tuberculosis. Hoping to get cured, he made his way to Florida and finally to Manatee. There, Mrs. Whitaker saw him and offered to take him to her home to spend the winter. Gratefully, Owen accepted. He spent hours in the sunshine and was rapidly regaining his health when the Indian alarm was sounded. He refused to seek refuge along with the Whitaker family, insisting he was not afraid of the Seminoles.

The destruction of Whitaker's home was discovered by Hance Wyatt, Mrs. Whitaker's brother, while out searching for food for the hungry refugees in Branch's Fort. From a distance, he saw smoke arising from the smoldering logs. He returned to Manatee to get assistance. Eight men volunteered to go back with him to fight the marauding Seminoles.

When the party arrived at Yellow Bluffs, the Indians had fled. The house and outbuildings were entirely destroyed. In the ashes, the men found the charred bones of Owen, the first and only American ever killed in the Sarasota region by the Indians. How he met his death is not known. Pioneers say he probably hid in the storage room of the Whitaker home when the Indians attacked, was smothered by the smoke, and burned to death.

For nine long months, the pioneer families huddled together in Branch's Fort and Braden's Castle. During the summer, conditions were almost intolerable. Flies, gnats and mosquitoes made life miserable. Epidemics of whooping cough and measles broke out among the children. Many older people became ill. And to add to the worries of Dr. Branch, three babies were born in the fort.

The first appearance of the stork brought to Mrs. Whitaker her first son, Furman Chaires Whitaker, named for the Leon County plantation owner in whose home Bill Whitaker had once lived. The other two babies born in the fort were William Blakely Tresca, born to Louise Wyatt Tresca, October 11, 1856, and Alice Mary Wyatt, born to Mary Fife Wyatt, December 16, 1856. Both were first cousins of infant Furman.

The marauding Seminoles were relentlessly pursued by three companies of militia during 1856 and by the end of the year the redskins had been driven deep into the Everglades. The threat of more attacks in the Manatee-Sarasota section was ended. Settlers began leaving the haven of Branch's Fort to return to their homes. Nevertheless, they did not feel entirely safe until early in 1858 when Billy Bowlegs, with 139 survivors of his tribe, were herded on Egmont Key in lower Tampa Bay and put on transports for the west.

But one of the captives chose death rather than deportation from the

land he loved—Tiger Tail, a brave warrior. The story is told that on the morning scheduled for departure, Tiger Tail poured a handful of powdered glass into a cup of water and swallowed it. Then he spread his blanket on the sandy beach and stretched out upon it. There he died, while his young daughter knelt by his side, weeping bitterly.

After the banishment of Billy Bowlegs and his tribe, the government estimated that fewer than two hundred Seminoles—mostly women and children—were left in the state, hidden in the fastness of the Big Cypress and the Everglades. Decade after decade passed into history. But never again did the Seminoles venture forth to challenge their white conquerors. Today, a few of them can be seen by tourists who zip along the Tamiami Trail. But most of them still mistrust the white man and remain hidden in their camps, far from the beaten roads.

### *After the Indian Uprising*

Bill Whitaker lost no time in building a new home at Sarasota Bay after the Seminole menace was ended. But he did not rebuild on the site of his old home on Yellow Bluffs. Mrs. Whitaker wanted to get farther back from the water so her garden would not be damaged by strong winds off the bay. She chose a spot in a dense hammock about two hundred yards inland, just east of what is now Tamiami Trail.

Kinfolk of Mrs. Whitaker helped clear the site and in roughhewing timber for the foundation blocks, joists and studding. The weather boards, flooring and finishing lumber were brought down from Cedar Keys in a schooner. The family moved into it in July, 1857.

The task of homebuilding finished, Whitaker turned his attention to his herd of cattle which had been allowed to roam on the open range all during the Indian uprising. Rounding them up, he found he had enough to make a big shipment to Key West. That done, he planted a large garden, pruned his orange grove, and then went back to fishing. He had lost a year's work—and now he had to make up for it.

In getting back on his feet again, Whitaker needed help badly. And he found it—in a thicket!

Out riding herd one day, he heard a strange noise in a dense clump of palmettos. Startled, he got off his horse to investigate. Fearing rattlesnakes, he took with him the heavy stirrup from his saddle. He pushed aside the overhanging fronds of a palmetto, and saw a young negro lying on the ground, groaning in pain. The negro glanced up, saw the stirrup in Whitaker's hand, and begged: "Doan hit me, massah; doan hit me. I'se sick!"

Whitaker half carried the young negro to the horse, put him on the saddle and took him to his home. There Mrs. Whitaker cared for him until he regained his health.

While convalescing, the negro, who said his name was Jeffrey Bolding, admitted he was a runaway slave. He said he had come to Florida from North Carolina where he had been forced to work sixteen hours a day in a canebreak under a vile-tempered overseer who beat him cruelly and often. To prove his statements, Jeffrey uncovered his back and showed it was criss-crossed with raw, festering welts, obviously made by a black-snake whip.

To escape more beatings, Jeffrey said, he ran away one night and headed southward, hoping to reach the Everglades where other runaway slaves had gone before. He traveled at night and slept in thickets during the day to avoid being seen. When found by Whitaker, he had been on the road a month and hadn't eaten one good meal the entire time.

Whitaker did not want to return the negro to his master. On the other hand, he did not want to harbor a runaway slave. So he solved the problem by making arrangements with the owner, by letter, for buying Jeffrey for \$1,000.

That was the way the first slave came to what is now Sarasota County.

Jeffrey was not long without company. A slave auction was held in Manatee in November and Mrs. Whitaker acquired two more slaves. An entry in Manatee County records reads: "November 13, 1857, Know all men by these present, that I, James T. Archer, for value received of Mrs. Mary Whitaker, wife of William Whitaker, have bargained, sold and delivered to the said Mrs. Whitaker, to her separate use as if she were unmarried and free from all debt of her husband, the following slaves, to wit: Harriet and John, and I do warrant the title thereto against myself and the Union Bank of Florida, (signed) James T. Archer."

There are two versions of this slave auction. According to one version a boatload of slaves was brought up the Manatee River and sold to the highest bidder by Archer, a prominent Florida politician. The other version, which is more likely true, is that mortgages against the Gamble plantation were foreclosed by the Union Bank and that Archer was sent here to sell Gamble's slaves to help satisfy the debt. Gamble had made heavy expenditures in developing his property and it is known that he was swamped when borers got into his sugar cane in both 1856 and 1857 and ruined the crops.

Probably during the same slave auction Bill Whitaker also bought a slave—a young negress named Hannah. When she was taken to the Sarasota Bay home, Hannah lost no time falling in love with Jeffrey. A negro

minister came down from Manatee to solemnize their marriage, witnessed by scores of other negroes from the Manatee River plantations.

Hannah and Jeffrey lived together in happy bliss until 1863 when the Whitaker slaves were "liberated" and taken to Key West by a detachment of Union soldiers. After the war, Hannah chose to remain in Key West. But Jeffrey insisted upon coming back to the Whitakers. And he remained with the family until his death on July 22, 1904. He was probably the best known colored man in this entire region and he never lost an opportunity to pass out the information that he was "a high priced man." Whenever he got in an argument with another negro he would close it abruptly with: "Doan you go argufying with me, you no count field han'. I'se a thousand dollah niggah—yes, sah, a thousan' dollah niggah!"

Slaves helped Mrs. Whitaker greatly in caring for her gardens and her rapidly expanding family. They also helped in cleaning and salting fish. But they were worthless in rounding up the cattle. For that work a good white man was required. So Bill Whitaker got a "hired hand"—a man who later was to play a big part in the development of the community. He was I. A. Redd. He worked for Whitaker one winter and then joined the Confederate Army. More about him later.

### *The War Between the States*

A woman of spirit was Mary Whitaker. This she proved one day late in 1863 when a small group of Union soldiers, out on a pillaging expedition, stopped at her home.

What happened thereafter is well related by Mrs. Lillie B. McDuffee in her delightfully entertaining *Lures of the Manatee*: "The men, after ransacking the house of all its belongings not too cumbersome to take along, called for matches to set the house on fire. Without arguing, Mrs. Whitaker went into the house and returned with a block of matches and with a calmness not altogether pretense she handed it to the commanding officer and said, 'Sir, I want to look into the eyes of a man who can stoop so low as to burn the home of a helpless woman and her family.' Up to this time the drastic methods, later adopted by Sherman in Georgia, had not been resorted to by Union men. The soldiers turned away and the house was saved."

As the war continued, raids upon the Whitaker home became more and more frequent. Everything edible was taken away, including all chickens and pigs. The gardens were stripped clean. Life on Sarasota Bay became impossible and Whitaker finally moved his family to Manatee where it remained until after the war was ended.

While the war was in progress Whitaker did everything within his power to bring victory to the South. He sold a large part of his herd of

cattle to the Confederate Army and it's reported he did more than his share of blockade running. He also operated a grist mill deep in the Myakka Lake region, far away from possible raiding parties. In this mill was ground grain which kept many Manatee families supplied with grits and corn meal after a grist mill on the river was destroyed by Union raiders.

Whitaker also made a number of trips to Gainesville to buy badly needed wearing apparel for the people of Manatee, going in his long-tongued wagon pulled by a double team of mules. Supplies had become almost prohibitive in price. Common shoes for men had jumped in cost from \$2 to \$12. Ladies' gaiters were priced at \$15 and calico cost from \$3 to \$5 a yard. Finally, prices skyrocketed so high that no one in Manatee could any longer afford to make purchases—so Whitaker's trips ended.



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#### SARASOTA'S FIRST CHILDREN

Six of the eleven children of Mr. and Mrs. William H. Whitaker are shown above: (*left to right*) William, Louise, Hamlin (standing), Carrie (below), Nancy Catherine, and Furman.

To obtain vitally needed salt, the people of Manatee turned to the Gulf. They began boiling down salt water. To get three pounds of salt, they had to boil dry 100 gallons of water—and that required a great amount of wood for fuel. But no one minded tending the fires because life without salt wasn't worth living, war or no war.

During the war, Whitaker learned how to become a cobbler. He made shoes for all the members of his family. The lasts were carved out of soft pine, the exact size and shape of each person's feet. Pegs were made out of hickory. For his own shoes he used steer hides. But for the shoes of his wife and children, he used the tanned hides of deer. Mrs. Whitaker found these hand-made shoes so comfortable that she insisted upon having more pairs of them, long after the war was ended and "store shoes" again could be purchased.

Soon after hostilities were ended, the Whitaker family went back to their home at Sarasota Bay—to replant their gardens, make new fish nets to replace those destroyed by Yankee raiders, and build up the '47 herd again. In other words, to start life anew.

### *A Noted Confederate Fled from Here*

Judah P. Benjamin was fleeing for his life. A \$40,000 price was on his head, dead or alive. His name was high on the Yankee's list of "war criminals" and they were searching for him everywhere through the South.

No wonder the Yankees wanted Benjamin. He was known as "the brains of the Confederacy" and had served in President Jefferson Davis' cabinet, first as attorney general, next as secretary of war and later as secretary of state.

But Benjamin was too smart for the Union searchers. He left President Davis in Georgia, May 2, 1865, and headed for Florida. Disguised as a farmer and helped by loyal Confederates, Benjamin finally made his way to Tampa where he was hidden for several days in the home of James McKay.

While in Tampa, then swarming with Federal soldiers and sailors, Benjamin tried to make arrangements to get a boat in which he could sail to Nassau. But no "rebel" boats were left in the Tampa area so McKay advised him to go to Manatee and seek assistance from Captain Archibald McNeil, known throughout the south as one of the most daring of all blockade runners.

Late one afternoon in early June, Benjamin arrived at the Gamble Mansion, where Captain McNeil was then living. The Confederate leader was given a hearty welcome and assigned the best bed chamber, a large front room on the second floor, from which a glimpse of the Manatee River could be seen. There Benjamin hid for more than a week. He was almost caught

one day by a squad of Union soldiers who got close to the house before being detected. But luck was with Benjamin and he managed to flee to the jungle with McNeil in the nick of time. The soldiers ransacked the mansion from top to bottom, peering in every wardrobe and pantry and under beds. But they found nothing. Disgusted, they left, and Benjamin and McNeil returned.

After two weeks of anxious waiting, Benjamin finally succeeded in making arrangements with Captain Frederick Tresca for aiding him in his flight. Tresca, after a long search, located a sixteen-foot yawl at Clearwater which he bought with Benjamin's money. Hiring H. A. McLeod as

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#### SEA OATS

a sailor, Tresca took the boat to a cove near Yellow Bluffs, less than a quarter mile from Bill Whitaker's home.

Whitaker was a willing partner in the escape plot. He provisioned the boat and provided bedding. Then, on the afternoon of June 23, Benjamin

arrived at the Whitaker home in a horse-and-buggy, accompanied by the Rev. Ezekial Glazier. Some say Benjamin was brought to the Whitaker home in an ox cart, hidden beneath freshly butchered beef so he could not be seen by Yankees, known to be in the locality. Regardless of how he came, he arrived and Mrs. Whitaker had a elaborate dinner ready. Benjamin ate it hurriedly and then boarded the yawl.

The Whitakers went over to Yellow Bluffs to watch the boat sail slowly down Sarasota Bay and through the pass. Then it disappeared from sight. That was the end of the part Benjamin played in American history. When Tresca returned, weeks later, he told of a narrow escape Benjamin had had near Charlotte Harbor.

A Federal gunboat stopped the yawl, Tresca related, and inquisitive Yankee sailors came aboard. They found Benjamin, in cook's cap and apron, stirring the charcoal embers in the sandbox forward. His face was daubed with grease and soot. The sailors failed to recognize him but one remarked: "I don't know who he is but I'm damned if I ever saw a Jew cook working on a fishing boat till now."

At Knight's Key, Tresca bought a larger boat, the *Blonde*, and sailed into Nassau in safety. There Benjamin paid Tresca fifteen hundred dollars in gold, gave him the *Blonde* and bought ten-yard lengths of black silk for the ladies of Manatee who had befriended him. One of the pieces was for Mrs. Whitaker. From Nassau, Benjamin sailed to London where he soon became a member of Queen Victoria's counsel and a friend of such notables as Gladstone and Disraeli.

Before leaving Nassau, Tresca bought a boatload of merchandise which he brought back home. His heaviest purchases were English calico—bolt upon bolt. Practically all the cloth was purple, Tresca's favorite color. Purple with white pin stripes or tiny horseshoes, maple leaves, fleur-de-lis and various curlicues. Tresca gave several bolts to Mrs. Whitaker, whose two older daughters, Nancy and Louise, were then approaching young womanhood. The remainder was sold in Manatee and 'tis said that during the next five years every woman and child in that section had at least one purple dress. Bill Whitaker later bought the *Blonde* which he used in making trips up and down the coast.

Because of the purple calico and the good ship *Blonde*, memory of the Confederate leader, Judah P. Benjamin, lingered long in the minds of the Whitakers. Hence, his story has become a part of the story of Sarasota. The spot where Benjamin boarded the boat at the Yellow Bluffs' cove has been designated by a monument erected by the Colonel John A. Fite Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. The Gamble Mansion has become a state shrine and is now known as the Judah P. Benjamin Memorial.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEN CAME THE HOMESTEADERS

A NEW ERA dawned for the Land of Sarasota after the completion of the bitter war between the states. An era bright with rosy prospects for the future. An era which changed the Land of Sarasota from a "place at the end of nowhere" to a region famed throughout the nation for its life-giving sunshine, its fertile soil and its abundance of fish and game.

Slowly at first and then ever more rapidly, newcomers began coming into the region, settling up and down the coast and far inland. Some "squatted"; others homesteaded, filing claims for quarter-sections. A few bought large tracts for use as grazing lands.

Many of the new arrivals were northerners who had heard about the beautiful West Coast of Florida from Yankee sailors and soldiers, sent here on raiding expeditions during war days. After the war was over and the Yanks had returned to the cold and dreary winters of the north, they remembered the balmy climate of the West Coast and they sang its praises. Perhaps they were the persons who gave Sarasota its first advertising. Anyhow, northerners began streaming in.

With them came many families from southern states which had been desolated by northern armies. There also came families from sections of northern Florida which had been overrun by the despised carpetbaggers, worse in their way than Sherman's army of destruction. To escape the intolerable conditions concomitant with "negro rule," they migrated to the land which the carpetbaggers and their colored allies had not reached, because of its remoteness.

It would seem as though conflict and dissension would inevitably result from the mingling of these two groups—the "victorious" northerners and the persons for whom the war brought nothing but tragedy. But bitterness and strife—there were none. The two groups got along splendidly together. They intermarried. They joined in building the community. The Sarasota of today. Not the City of Sarasota but the back country which provided the sinew and muscle for the city which was to come, decades later.

The influx of new settlers was due in large measure to the Homestead Act passed by Congress in 1862. The federal government held title to huge tracts of land in Florida and, with the war ended, these tracts were available for occupation. Each settler was entitled to 160 acres, providing he built a home and tilled the soil for five years.

Here we must backtrack a moment. In the preceeding chapter, we mentioned the Armed Occupation Act which also made it possible for settlers to obtain 160 acres of land free. It was this act which caused the first migration to the Manatee River section. It also caused Bill Whitaker to settle on Sarasota Bay.

But opposition to this "free land measure" was vitriolic. The "plantation aristocracy" of the South and reactionary northern Whigs ganged up against it, simply because they did not want "common folks" to become too independent. They branded the measure as "communistic." And lobbyists for big land speculators, who wanted to grab the public domain themselves, put on the pressure. So the Land Office obediently delayed issuing land grants to the settlers—and Congress finally nullified the act, in effect, by amending it so drastically that its provisions became hopelessly obscure. It was effective for only one year.

As a result, few if any titles to land in this section can be traced back to the Armed Occupation Act. Just how Bill Whitaker got title to his homestead is an unsolved mystery. His grant states it was made under the provisions of the Act of 1847—but the Library of Congress states that "the statutes do not reveal any 'act of 1847'." So you figure it out.

But all that's immaterial. What's important is that by 1866 a bonafide homestead act was in effect. An act which really meant something—not just a jumble of words. And the settlement of the Land of Sarasota went on apace. Certainly there was room here for newcomers—in the entire area of what is now Sarasota County, Whitaker was the only settler. He was literally master of all he surveyed. But not for long. Soon he had neighbors.

### *The Odyssey of the Webbs*

Illness brought a party of nine persons from Utica, N. Y., to the Land of Sarasota in August, 1867. The newcomers were Mr. and Mrs. John G. Webb and their five children; Mrs. Webb's sister, Emily Graves and her father, Deacon Graves.

Mrs. Webb suffered from asthma and her physician told her that nothing but a warmer climate would help her. So her husband, a college graduate, sold his prospering drug store in Utica and his dairy farm, and headed for Florida. A returning Federal soldier had told him about the attractions of the Sarasota section so he came here, to become the founder of Osprey.

The trip was long and tiresome. The Webbs sailed from New York, February 1, 1867, in a 100-ton schooner *Sarah Helen* and landed thirteen days later in Key West, much the worst from the buffeting of the ship by storm-tossed waters. But in sunny Key West, they quickly recovered from the journey. They were enchanted with the roses they found bloom-

ing and the graceful, waving palms, and they were glad that henceforth Florida would be their home.

On February 20, the Webbs got passage on a schooner bound for Tampa and they arrived there a few days later. Tampa was then a tiny village, a supplement of Fort Brooke. The Webbs liked it but they had another spot in mind—a little bay somewhere south along the coast, marked by a high Indian mound, which the Federal soldier had described to them.

So the Webbs packed their bags again and went to Manatee. There they rented a vacant house owned by the Rev. Edmond Lee which they made their headquarters while Webb searched for the homesite the soldier had extolled.

Buying a small sloop which had been wrecked on Egmont Key, Webb had it repaired and then used it to cruise up and down the coast, looking for the little bay with the Indian mound. He could not find it. Discouraged, he made a down payment on a tract of land on Terra Ceia Island where an early settler had gained squatter's rights. But the deal fell through and Webb began his search again.

This time he was more fortunate. Talking to Bill Whitaker one day, he described the spot he was looking for. Whitaker, who was familiar with every foot of the coastline, identified the place—told Webb exactly where it was, twelve miles south of Yellow Bluffs on Little Sarasota Bay. To make sure Webb would find the spot, Whitaker took him there. Webb recognized it immediately. The beautiful bayou, the dense jungle growth, the high Indian mound—all were exactly as the soldier had described them. Webb was jubilant. This was the place he was seeking! Straightway he called the promitory Webb's Point—and it bore that name thereafter.

Returning to Manatee, Webb loaded the sloop with provisions and farming equipment he had foresightedly brought with him from the north. With his two sons and father-in-law he set sail for Webb's Point. On their way south they stopped at Whitakers and had a fine meal of venison steaks. Then they were on their way again.

The Webbs' first home, which they built themselves, was a typical pioneer's cabin, built of logs with a roof of thatched palmetto. Some of the wood for the interior was rafted down from Manatee where a lumber mill had just been put in operation. In August, six months after their arrival in Florida, the entire Webb family moved into the new home. Quite different it was from their fine home back in Utica but no one complained. They had come to Florida expecting to "rough it"—and rough it they did. Mrs. Webb's health was already greatly improved and, despite the hardships of pioneer life they felt the comforts of a fine northern home well lost.

The cabin, consisting of one large room, had an inner and an outer division. The inner division served as sleeping quarters for the women and children. The men slept in the outer division with their guns nearby ready to kill any prowling animals that might come along. There was need for taking this precaution—the woods were filled with wildcats.

Snakes sometimes entered the house. One day Mrs. Webb found a large rattler coiled under the dining table, poised ready to strike. Screaming, she ran from the house. Her son John Walter came rushing and killed the snake with a hoe.

The Webbs' older son, Will, contrived a lamp by making a stool about three feet high, with four spikes on top which were used to hold a plate. A fire of "light wood"—dry pine, rich with turpentine—furnished light and for many years this home-made contraption served as the parlor lamp.

After the Webbs were comfortably settled in their new home, they began clearing the land for a farm. The heavy undergrowth of the rich hammock land made the job backbreaking. Sometimes it seemed the task was never ending. The palmettos and bushes were cut down, piled into huge heaps, left to dry for several weeks and then burned.

When an acre or so was cleared, the Webbs planted their first garden—sugar cane, sweet potatoes, peas, squash and corn. After the sweet potatoes sprouted, the Webbs had plenty of trouble. The tender leaves of the vines were too tempting for the deer which overran the region. Finally, to prevent the entire crop from being totally destroyed, the Webbs built a high fence around the garden to serve as a barricade.

The garden also attracted wild turkeys. They came in flocks and gobbled many of the crops. Scarecrows didn't frighten them away. Neither did shooting at them. Hundreds of the birds had to be shot before the others learned that the luscious peas and corn had not been planted especially for them.

The winter of 1868-69 was one of the coldest winters ever known in Florida. Just when the crops were looking their best the big freeze came and killed everything. Even large coconut trees on the lower islands were frozen.

The Webbs disliked the idea of losing all the sugar cane they had worked so hard to raise and they thought they might be able to save part of the crop by making syrup. But they had no mill and none could be purchased. Not to be outdone, the Webbs fashioned a mill of their own, built entirely of wood, even the rollers. One fault with the contrivance was that the stalks persisted in coming out of the rolls on the same side as they went in but no way could be found to remedy this defect. The cogs wore out so quickly that all of one boy's time was required to carve replace-

ments. The syrup finally made was none too good because the cane had been frozen. Nevertheless, it was better than no syrup at all.

The following year, Webb bought a factory-made mill and began making syrup on a commercial basis, selling it through a store in Manatee. He also built a refinery and began making sugar. Later on, when other settlers came into the Osprey section, Webb bought their cane and built up a good business. In the Florida Gazetteer of 1886, Webb was listed as having a large sugar mill. The sugar cane planters of the Osprey region listed in the publication were S. C. Bullard, D. Garrett, William Lowe, J. M. Clower and J. H. Hill, in addition to Webb himself.

This sugar mill of Webb's undoubtedly was the first "manufacturing plant" in what is now Sarasota County. It provided cash income for a number of early settlers and helped them get established. Unfortunately, the mill has long since been dismantled. Had it been preserved it would be a most interesting reminder of a bygone past.

In addition to having established the first manufacturing plant, Webb has the distinction of having built and operated the first "hotel" for tourists in the Land of Sarasota.

The enterprise began in a small way, after the Webbs had been visited during their first Florida winter by an old friend, Colonel Frank Jewett, a noted scientist. Returning from an expedition up the Amazon River, the colonel stopped at Webbs. He enthused over the splendid climate, the unexcelled fishing, and the fine hunting—and he told Webb he should provide a place where others could winter in this land of sunshine.

This suggestion was enough to start Webb off. He built several additions to his home and began advertising in northern newspapers. He described the beautiful land of Florida where summer spends the winter and he took particular pains in describing that especial paradise on earth—Webb's Winter Resort on Little Sarasota Bay. So to Webb goes credit for another "first"—the first newspaper advertiser of the attractions of the Sarasota region. That was done during the winter of 1870-71. He continued advertising many years thereafter.

This advertising brought many people to Webb's Resort and during the winter he would have as many as eighteen or twenty "tourists". To house them all he erected individual guest cottages. Some of these people came seeking a warmer, more healthful climate; others to fish and hunt, and still others to study the plant and animal life of Florida, or to try to fathom the mystery regarding the ancient Indian tribes.

Among the first guests at Webb's Resort were the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland. They were so entranced by the beauty of the Florida West Coast that the Duke later bought a large tract of land north of Clearwater and helped to found Sutherland, now called Palm Harbor.

Another noted visitor was Dr. Ales Hrdlicka, Hungarian scientist and internationally famed writer. It was Hrdlicka who first advanced the theory, in his *Anthropology of Florida*, that the Indian mounds were made by an ancient tribe of Indians similar to the Aztecs of Mexico. Prior to Hrdlicka's research work, practically everyone in Florida believed the mounds had been made by the Seminoles.

Many of Webb's guests returned year after year and when the town of Sarasota was founded, a number of them came here to make their homes.

From the time of his arrival in the Land of Sarasota, Webb took a lively interest in politics. Proof that other pioneer settlers held no grudge against him because he was a Yankee is furnished by the fact that in 1878 he was elected a county commissioner of Manatee County, which then embraced what is now Sarasota County. Later he was elected county judge and held office at the county seat at Pine Level, forty miles inland. One day while at Pine Level his horse wandered off and he had to walk the entire distance back home.

During the 1870's and early 80's a small community grew up in Webb's neighborhood and in 1884 he applied for a postoffice. His petition was granted and the community was named Osprey at his request. He chose the name because of his admiration for the beautiful osprey, a gorgeous dark-brown fish-hawk.

One of Judge Webb's guests, a young woman in ill health, loved the locality so much that she requested that when she died her money be used to build a church or a school. "Mary's Chapel" was erected and still stands in the jungle. Near the site of the chapel is a cemetery where the founder of Osprey and most of his family now are buried.

One of Webb's daughters, Anna, married Robert S. Griffith who later was clerk of Manatee County. Another daughter, Eliza, married Frank Guptill, a young man who was sent here from Jacksonville by the owners of a ship which had been wrecked on Siesta Key. Guptill later became one of the best known boat builders on the Florida West Coast.

In the winter of 1870-71, a family which later played a prominent part in the development of the Sarasota region stayed at Webb's Resort—the family of John S. Blackburn. The newcomer liked this part of Florida so well that he homesteaded about a mile and a half south of Osprey. His two sons, Frank and George, homesteaded near by on the bay.

Frank Blackburn became the owner of one of the most unusual boats which ever sailed the waters of the West Coast—the sloop *Sea Turtle*. It resembled its name, being almost as wide as it was long. From a distance, it looked something like a big bowl. Its appearance was strange but it proved to be admirably adapted for sailing in the shallow waters of

the bays and bayous because it drew less than two feet of water and could carry unusually heavy loads.

George Blackburn later moved to Sarasota and became one of the leading merchants of the town in its early days. His widow still lives in Sarasota.

### *At Horse and Chaise*

The Land of Sarasota has had a fascinating lure for a century and more. People have been attracted here from all parts of the country—for many different reasons. Bill Whitaker came here because of a love for adventure and a yearning to create a home of his own out of the wilderness. The Webbs came because of ill health. And then, on November 23, 1868, came the Knight family, fifteen strong, to become the first settlers at "Horse and Chaise."

It was the lush grazing lands of the Myakka River region, between the river and Lemon Bay, which caused the Knights to migrate here.

The head of the family was Jesse Knight, a staunch Methodist, known in later years throughout the entire Land of Sarasota as the Reverend Jesse Knight, even though he never was ordained. A native of Georgia, Knight married Miss Rebecca C. Varn, his boyhood sweetheart, when 22 years old. They had a large family, seven boys and eight girls.

A cattle raiser, Knight wanted more land than he could afford to buy in Georgia so in 1852 the family headed for Florida, taking a herd of cattle along. More than a year was required to reach Hillsborough County, the family stopping every now and then to let the animals rest. Knight finally homesteaded about twenty miles northeast of Tampa, at a place now called Knight's Station.

When the war began, Knight moved his cattle to the plains around Upper Myakka Lake, so they would not be seized by Yankee raiders, and left them there under the care of a son-in-law, Shadrick "Shade" Hancock.

At Myakka, the cattle flourished and when the war was over, Knight decided to homestead where his animals would have plenty of room to roam. But he didn't want to live inland—he preferred the coast. He finally selected one of the loveliest spots in Florida; a spot where crystal streams mingled with waters of the Gulf, the place now called Nokomis.

Only a hundred miles separated Knight's old homestead from his new but nearly a month was required to make the trip. Eight covered wagons drawn by oxen, three buggies drawn by mules and seven mounted horses made up the caravan—plus three hundred head of cattle.

For the first forty miles of the journey, the Knights followed an old-time trail which led to Upper Myakka Lake. But after that there was no trace of a road and the Knights had to clear a trail as they went along. Over the open prairies, fairly rapid progress was made but it was a differ-

ent story when the caravan came to hammock lands, heavily covered with palmettos and oaks. To enable the carts and buggies to proceed, hundreds of trees had to be felled and pulled aside. One day the party succeeded in advancing less than a quarter mile.

The Knights suffered a minor disaster when they were almost in sight of the Gulf. They came to a broad creek, near the head of Dona Bay, which they had to ford. The mules pulling the leading buggy refused to budge. Knight tried to coax them to enter the water by holding ears of corn in front of their mouths. But the stubborn animals would not be tempted. Whips were swung but still the mules stood rooted in their tracks.

Finally Knight had an idea. He yelled to his oldest son: "Bill, in that second cart there 're some dried deer hides. You know, they make a wicked, cracking noise when you handle them. Get one of those hides and stand just behind those critters and then take the hide and sort of shake it—and sort of not shake it!"

Bill got the idea. He hurried back to the cart, pulled out a large hide, and stood alongside the team of balky mules. Then he shook the hide—not rather lightly, as his father had suggested, but with all his strength. The shaking hide sounded like exploding firecrackers. Frightened, the mules leaped forward, splashing through the creek. Several other teams followed, also at a record pace.

The result was near-catastrophe. Two of the buggies and a heavily loaded cart upset in the creek and many of Knight's belongings went overboard. Nearly everything was recovered—but sopping wet.

Because of this proof of the super-efficiency of shaken deer hides, the creek became known as Shakit Creek. It still bears that name on many maps despite efforts in recent years to give it the more dignified name of Albee Creek.

After the Knights finally succeeded in getting the entire caravan across the ford, they pitched camp on the south bank of the creek. It was a beautiful spot and the family decided to stake out their homestead there. They built a large "double-pen" log house—two cabins connected by a covered breezeway. In this home, which stood for more than a half century, the Knights prospered and became one of the leading families of the West Coast.

For their cattle, they had a princely domain. By building a fence straight east from the headwaters of Shakit Creek to the Myakka River, they had an entire peninsula for themselves—a peninsula ten miles across and more than thirty miles long, with some of the richest grazing grounds in the entire state. In the years which followed, the Knights' herds grew from 300 head to almost 20,000.

On their trek southward from Hillsborough County, the Knights were

accompanied by a neighbor family, Mr. and Mrs. John Fletcher and their six children, two boys and four girls. The Fletchers homesteaded two miles south of the Knights and lived there about five years. They then moved to the Bee Ridge section.

A few months after the Knights and Fletchers settled they got neighbors. One day early in February, 1869, a schooner named *Morninglight* came sailing through Casey's Pass and anchored near the south shore of Dona Bay. Four families were on the ship—families which had left their homes in Mobile, Ala., because of hatred of northern carpetbaggers and "negro supremacy."

In this group of "refugees" were Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Drew and three daughters, Mr. and Mrs. William Brunson, Captain and Mrs. Chandler Young and seven children, and Mr. and Mrs. George Grayson and two children. The Drews and Graysons homesteaded close to where the Venice air base is now located; the Brunsons went up the coast and homesteaded at what is now known as Immokalee, and the Youngs bought a squatter's claim to a tract in the same neighborhood.

Captain Young later became one of the best known skippers on the West Coast. Aided by Levi Jonathan Knight, one of Jesse Knight's sons, he built a sloop which he named the *Lucy M.* He then bought a large schooner built in Manatee by Ben S. Curry which Young named in honor of its builder. The *Ben S. Curry* was used for many years to carry shipments of vegetables, dried fish and cattle from the Land of Sarasota to Key West and Cedar Keys and bring back merchandise which could not be purchased locally.

The community which grew up in the vicinity of Dona Bay was known for many years as Horse and Chaise. It got its peculiar name from a growth of timber on a promitory facing the open Gulf. Two clumps of trees stood there and seamen, coming up the coast, swore that one clump looked exactly like a horse and the other exactly like a chaise. The description was so apt that the name was used until the community got a post-office, years later, and was officially named Venice.

Dona Bay received its name from the sloop *Dona* built by Jesse Knight soon after he settled at Horse and Chaise. It was the only sailing vessel in the region, at that time, and was used to bring supplies from Manatee. After Knight started anchoring the boat in the bay, settlers began calling the bay Dona and the name stuck.

When and how Casey's Pass was named, no one knows. According to waterfront legend, an Irishman named Casey settled there for a number of years early in the nineteenth century and left during the War of 1812. But that's only legend. However, if a Casey really did live there he's one Irishman whose name has clung to a bit of Florida.

*The Land of Sarasota Beckons*

The fifteen years which elapsed between 1868 and 1883 were truly bright years for this region.

The virgin forests rang with the sound of axes biting into solid wood as trees were felled for the homes of new settlers. Rich hammock lands, untouched by man since time began, were cleared and cultivated. Gardens and groves were planted. More and more herds of cattle grazed on the open range. Up and down the coast a steadily increasing number of fishermen cast their nets, making rich hauls from waters alive with fish.

During that golden decade and a half, more than a hundred families came here to make their homes. Many acquired title to land either by proving up homestead claims or by outright purchase. A large number "squatted," determined to look around a while before choosing the exact locations for their future homesteads. There was plenty of land—so why hurry in filing claims?

Included among the first newcomers were two men who had fought with the Confederate army and had seen hard service—John L. Edwards and Isaac A. Redd. No story of Sarasota would be complete without special mention of these two pioneers.

Redd was no stranger here. In 1857 he was hired by Bill Whitaker to take charge of his growing herd of cattle. But he did not stay here long—not just then. He had a sweetheart in Tallahassee, pretty Elizabeth Brown, and to Tallahassee he went in the spring of 1858 to convince her to become his bride. He did a good selling job—and they were married, on June 3. Settling at Fort Hammer, they had two children, Laura Fedonia and Theodore W. Then came the war, and Redd volunteered for service. He fought in many of the major campaigns of the conflict.

When the war was over, Redd returned to his family. In 1867, he decided that the Land of Sarasota was the place he should make his future home, so here he came, to become the founder of Bee Ridge. He gave the locality its name because of the large number of bees he found there. The bees had hives in nearly every hollow tree and for years thereafter settlers went to Bee Ridge regularly to get honey.

At Bee Ridge, in 1876, Redd led a movement to establish a Missionary Baptist Church, the first church in what is now Sarasota County. From then on, he was actively engaged in the ministry and helped found many churches in Manatee, DeSoto and Polk counties. Until his death in 1912, the Reverend Redd was one of the most loved and respected men in this entire region.

Wounds suffered in the war between the states caused Edwards to come to South Florida. He was born on a large plantation fifteen miles northwest of Monticello, in Jefferson County, Florida, where his father,

a native of North Carolina, settled while Florida was still a territory. During the war, the plantation was devastated and when Edwards returned there after cessation of hostilities, he decided to make a new start somewhere else. Still weak from his war injuries, he was advised to go farther south.

Making his way to the coast, he secured a small sloop and started cruising southward, hunting and fishing as he went. He first visited the Sarasota Bay region in 1867. He liked it and made up his mind to return after he had traveled a little more. So on he went to Key West where he worked for a year in a shipbuilding plant, doing cabinet work for a British-owned concern.

After accumulating a nestegg, Edwards took to his sloop again and headed back north. It was getting dark when he came through Big Sarasota Pass and he was guided to an anchorage near Whitaker Bayou by a light burning in the Whitaker home. He slept on board the boat. When he awakened the next morning he was surprised to see a large yacht anchored nearby. Its owner hailed him and the two men exchanged greetings.

The yachtsman was John A. Gilfillan, a wealthy mining engineer from Denver, who had come to the Florida West Coast to fish and hunt during the winter months. Edwards and Gilfillan became close friends and spent the remainder of the winter together, living part of the time on the yacht and the rest of the time in a lean-to shack they built on the bayfront a little north of Indian Beach.

In late spring, Gilfillan returned home. But Edwards remained here, satisfied this was the finest place in Florida in which to live. For a couple of years he took things easy—but then the time came when he had to get down to work. By a strange quirk of fate, Oden Ange and his family settled on Lockwood Ridge, just four miles away. Edwards knew the family well—it was Ange's daughter, Mellie, who had nursed him back to health after he had been wounded in a battle in South Carolina. The old friendship was renewed—and it quickly ripened into love. John and Mellie were married in Manatee in the spring of 1872.

For more than a decade thereafter, Edwards operated a "fish ranch" at his homestead on the bay. Settlers from as far away as fifty miles inland came to his place in their covered ox-wagons and camped while they caught, salted and sun-cured supplies of fish. Edwards also sold and traded fish to settlers who did not want to take the time to do the work themselves. Oden Ange often helped him—he had the reputation of being the most expert net caster in this entire region, being able to throw a net more than fifty feet in such a manner that it would spread out perfectly and cover a large school. With Ange on hand, fishing was no trick at all.

Mr. and Mrs. Edwards had a family of seven children, five boys and two girls. Only two are now living, Arthur B. and Irvin H., both residents of Sarasota.

### *Sara Sota Gets a Postoffice*

Early in the seventies a tiny community began to form on the mainland between Hudson Bayou and Phillippi Creek.

The first settler in this locality was Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Bennett, of Brooklyn, N. Y., who filed a homestead claim to a quarter section facing on the bay Jan. 10, 1870. The Bennetts came here because their 17-year-old son, Jesse, Jr., was suffering from tuberculosis and their physician advised them to live in a milder climate than that of New York state.

In Hallock's *Camp Life in Florida*, published in 1876, appears this note: "We anchored at the south end of Greater Sarasota Bay. We noticed a house near the beach, made a landing, and were gratified to find that the residents were from Brooklyn and named Bennett . . . Bennett Junior was acquainted with the coast and offered to pilot us but could not leave until Bennett Senior returned from Manatee with their boat."

Old timers say young Bennett became well while living here and that the family, including two sons and a daughter, then returned to Brooklyn where the father had a dry goods firm. The section they owned is now known as McClelland Park. Many of the trees they planted around their home are still standing. Their schooner, used for trading along the coast, was named *Cherry M.*

Soon after the Bennetts settled here, they had neighbors. Many neighbors. The first were Mr. and Mrs. Peter Crocker who came here from Key West in March, 1870, and lived a few years in a palmetto-thatched lean-to about a mile south of the Bennett home, on the bayfront. Crocker then bought a twenty-acre tract on what is now Bee Ridge Road, near the Tamiami Trail, and built his home, which is still standing, one of the few remaining homes of the early pioneers.

In this home on July 7, 1873, was born a daughter, Fannie, who is today the oldest living "native-daughter" of Sara Sota. She is the wife of Zanard B. Curtis.

Other settlers followed—many whose names now can be found only on yellowing land deeds in the Manatee County courthouse and on land abstracts. Some died and left no descendants. Others moved away during the hard years which came later. But they were all flesh-and-blood people, those almost forgotten pioneers, and they worked together in establishing a community all their own, bounded roughly on the north by Hudson Bayou and on the south by Phillippi Creek. In a few years it became quite a self-sufficient community and even took unto itself a name—Sara Sota.

There then came to this community a man whose name will live forever in the history of Sarasota, not only because of what he himself did but what others did to him—Charles E. Abbe, a native of Belvidere, Ill.

A well educated man, Abbe was called "professor" by the other pioneers. He came here first for his health during the winter of 1874-75. He liked the climate and early in 1876 he came back again to make his home, accompanied by his wife, Charlotte R., and two daughters, Caroline A. and Nellie. His cousin, Dr. Myron Abbe, also came with his wife Carrie S.

Photo  
Not  
Available

Sarasota Bay as seen from Bayfront Park in the moonlight.

During the next two years, Abbe became the largest landowner in the entire bay area. He bought 359 acres, in his wife's name, from the state for \$303.24 on May 11, 1876, and forty more acres from the state in his own name, for \$40, on March 16, 1878. He also bought three tracts from Jesse Bennett, at prices ranging from \$2 to \$10 per acre, and additional tracts from Richard C. Cunliff and Robert Greer.

On one of the tracts purchased from Bennett, located on what is now Osprey Avenue near Hillview, nearly a mile and a half south of Main street, Abbe built a home and a small store. The settlers in the community urged him to try to get a post office. He applied to the government and his

petition was granted. The post office of Sara Sota, with Abbe as postmaster, came into existence August 16, 1878 and was the first post office in the entire Land of Sarasota.

This was a great stride forward for the tiny community. Up until then the settlers got their mail at the Whitaker home where it was brought every week or so by the Whitaker boys when they returned from trips to Manatee. But the Whitakers lived miles up the sandy trail and for the settlers below Hudson Bayou, the trip there was long and hard. Now with their own post office, mail came almost to their very doorsteps. It was brought down once a week by Henry Clark of Manatee who carried it in his saddlebags. The post office remained at the Abbe store until after the coming of the Scotch colonists.

To Caroline Abbe goes the honor of having started the first school here. During the summer of 1878, mothers of Sara Sota children asked her repeatedly to help them teach their children. Caroline accepted the responsibility and, with the aid of men in the community, fitted up an abandoned fishing shack on the south side of Hudson Bayou, near the bay, as a school house.

In that tiny shack, on Monday morning, October 7, 1878, the youngsters of Sara Sota first attended classes to learn their reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic. Miss Caroline had more than a dozen pupils.

One of the pupils was Charles C. Whitaker, fourth son of William Whitaker, now a prominent attorney and banker of Tampa. Every day, rain or shine, he made the long trip down to the bayou from the Whitaker home. Occasionally, his oldest brother Furman accompanied him to buy supplies at Abbe's store.

Perhaps because of these trips there occurred the first elopement of the Sara Sota community. Furman met Caroline's sister Nellie and it was love at first sight. They decided to get married. But when Nellie hinted to her father that she had matrimonial intentions, he became enraged. The very idea—his daughter marrying a young whipper-snapper who was not even self-supporting! He'd never give his consent—never!

But Nellie had a will of her own. She loved Furman and was determined to marry him regardless of whether her father liked it or not. So the young couple made plans to elope. With her sister's help, Nellie secretly packed a few clothes and early Tuesday morning, May 13, 1879, she slipped out of the house and hurried through the woods to the school house where Furman was anxiously waiting.

Hand-in-hand, they crossed the narrow footway across the bayou to the north bank, where Furman's team was tied. The young lovers got in the buggy and raced up the sandy trail to the Whitaker home where the Rev. Edward Franklin Gates was waiting to perform the wedding cere-

mony. The bride and groom then went to Manatee for their honeymoon. A few days later they returned and began housekeeping in a little cottage which the Whitaker boys helped build for them at Yellow Bluffs, on the site of the original Whitaker home which the Indians had burned in 1856.

During the following winter, Furman went away to college to begin completing his medical education. While he was gone, the first "telephone" was installed on the Florida West Coast, connecting the two Whitaker homes, so the young bride could communicate with her mother-in-law. The "telephone" consisted of two metal disks and a copper wire, stretched taut from house to house. The contrivance was bought from a mail-order house and, according to old timers, it really worked.

The marriage of Furman and Nellie Abbe was the third which occurred in the Whitaker clan. The first was a Sarasota-Manatee romance which culminated September 14, 1874, when pretty, red-haired, tiny Nancy Catherine Stuart Whitaker, the first white child born in what is now Sarasota County, married John Helveston, of Manatee. The couple lived at Alzarti Acres, a forty-acre tract on Indian Beach given to the bride as a wedding present by her father.

On April 19, 1876, Louise Anstie Whitaker, the second white child born in this locality, married Capt. Thomas Gordon Edmondson, of Baltimore, who had come to Manatee to spend the winter. The wedding ceremony was performed in Braden Castle. The bride and groom then left for Baltimore where they lived until the late Eighties when they returned and purchased a homesteader's claim to more than a hundred acres on Siesta Key, then called Sarasota Key.

### *A Hurricane Brought Settlers*

Early Sunday morning, September 30, 1877, a vicious hurricane hit the Florida West Coast. The wind came with wicked violence from the southwest and much of the low-lying shore of Sarasota Bay was inundated. Many of the fishermen's nets were washed away but their houses, built on higher land, were not badly damaged.

After the winds died down, the settlers found that the sloop *Advance*, owned by Fort Myers' spongers, had been washed ashore about two hundred feet south of the present city pier. It was left stranded among a dense clump of palmettos nearly a hundred yards inland. Men aboard the boat escaped without injury—but they were badly worried. They didn't know how to get their craft back into the water again.

But settlers from miles around came to their aid. On the following Thursday, a score of men appeared with seven yokes of oxen. Palmettos around the boat were cut down, pine logs were cut for rollers, and the oxen pulled the boat down to the water. The job took all day but the vol-

unteer workers didn't go hungry while they toiled. Their wives had come along and prepared an old-time picnic "lunch"—which meant a barbecued feast. On the next high tide, the *Advance* was floated and after repairs were made, it took to sea again, none the worse for its land-going expedition.

That hurricane, the worst which hit the West Coast since the historic storm of 1848, was the direct cause for the establishment on Sarasota Bay of a new industry and almost gave the bay region its first hotel—almost, but not quite.

Both the industrial concern, a fish oil and guana factory, and the hotel had been started originally at Sanibel Island, at the entrance to the Caloosahatchee River. The promoters of the first enterprise were A. E. Willard and his young brother, Charles, of New Jersey. The backers of the hotel project were Dr. J. J. Dunham, Dr. A. W. Hunter and Eugene Skinner, all of New York.

Construction work on both the guana plant and the hotel at Sanibel Island was practically completed when the hurricane struck. Both buildings were demolished. The guana plant, located close to the water, was washed away. But the lumber used for the hotel was salvaged from the wreckage.

The physicians and Skinner had had enough of Sanibel Island but they were convinced that if they built again, on good high ground on the mainland, their venture would be a success. So they rafted the salvaged lumber here and selected a site near the present site of the Mira Mar Hotel. Skinner filed a homestead claim for the land. Carpenters were brought from Lakeland to erect the building. Included among them were Atkin Lackzonski, A. E. Pooser and A. E. Hill, who later homesteaded.

The hotel was to be a fine affair, with at least forty rooms and all "modern conveniences," including two bathrooms. A separate wing was to be erected for persons suffering from tuberculosis. It would surpass anything on the entire West Coast!

Unfortunately, however, the promoters had a disagreement when the hotel was about half completed. The physicians accused Skinner of having filed the homestead claim in his own name—they insisted the land should be purchased outright from the state in the names of all three. The quarrel became so bitter that the hotel project was abandoned. The building was torn down and part of the lumber was taken by Skinner to Fogartyville, near Manatee, where it was used to build a boarding house.

Dr. Hunter and Dr. Dunham both remained here, the latter homesteading on the bayfront near the present boundary line between Sarasota and Manatee counties. Two of Dr. Dunham's four daughters, Mary and Jessie, in 1880 volunteered to serve as teachers, without pay, in the first

school opened in the locality north of Whitaker Bayou. Classes were held in the home of Newman Smith, near the present Sarasota Army Air Base. One of the first pupils was young Arthur B. Edwards.

The fish oil and guana project was more successful than the hotel venture.

Willard started by making fertilizer from fish. This was a simple process. He built large cedar bins on Siesta Key, tossed the fish into the bins, and then left them there to rot. When thoroughly decomposed, the powdery mass was bagged and sold, some locally and some to traders who took it to Cedar Keys. Old settlers say this fish fertilizer excelled anything on the market today.

With the fertilizer business well established, Willard's mind turned again to ways and means of starting a fish oil plant, similar to the one the hurricane had ruined at Sanibel Island.

To get a site which would be safe from storms, he purchased from the United States a tract of 93.78 acres in what is now the heart of Sarasota. He paid \$1.25 an acre—a total of \$116.23. Today that tract is worth millions since it takes in a large part of the downtown business section. He got title to the land February 1, 1882.

Willard then went to Tallahassee to see if he could get backing for the fish oil venture. A persuasive promoter, he succeeded in interesting P. Houston, then adjutant general of Florida; Capt. B. M. Burroughs, and E. W. Blair, a Tallahassee financier. These men, with Willard, incorporated the Florida Fish Oil and Fertilizing Co., the first incorporated manufacturing enterprise in the Land of Sarasota. The firm was capitalized for \$25,000. The majority of the stock was reportedly held by Blair, who was made treasurer of the company. Willard was the general manager and Houston the president. Incorporation papers were obtained July 7, 1882.

Using money advanced by the other company officials, Willard erected a two-story plant near the present northeast corner of Main Street and Gulf Stream Avenue. The plant was equipped with the best machinery for extracting oil from fish which could be purchased. A small wharf was built for fishing boats to dock.

Soon the fish oil plant was going full blast and about ten barrels of oil were being produced daily. The remains of the "squeezed" fish were taken to the cedar bins on Siesta Key to make fertilizer. The demand for both the fish oil and fertilizer was good and the company appeared to prosper.

Employees of the fish oil company lived in a log house built back up in the woods near the present intersection of Central Avenue and Eighth Street. Willard himself built a large, rambling frame house near the bay

close to what is now Mound Street. Lumber for the house was brought here by schooner from Cedar Keys.

The fate of this apparently prospering company is a complete mystery. Old timers say land speculators put an end to it by acquiring Blair's controlling interest in the concern and closing up the plant. Willard owned the land on which the plant was built but he was heavily in debt, the old timers say, and the land speculators forced him to sell out—land and all.

These "old timers' tales" cannot be verified. It is known, however, that John J. Dunne, a director of Disston's company, was at that time trying in every way possible to obtain good waterfront properties which would serve as "outlets" for Disston's vast back country domain. And it is a matter of record that on January 10, 1884, Dunne acquired Willard's 93.78 acres for \$1,500. And the purchase included the fish oil plant and its equipment! That looks very much as though Willard had been forced to sell, somehow or other.

There is another mysterious phase to this whole affair. Two old maps, one owned by Arthur B. Edwards and the other a government map, show that early in the Eighties, E. W. Blair, the treasurer of the company, was the owner of a large tract of land just north of the Willard tract. Included in his indicated holdings was the land between Seventh and Twelfth streets which in 1886 was included in the first recorded town plat of Sarasota. This section was supposed to be owned by the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co., Ltd., but Manatee County records show the company did not get title to the property until 1891—and then after buying up \$7.32 worth of unpaid tax certificates owed "by parties unknown"! Altogether, 190 acres were secured for \$7.32! Including half an entire town! Funny business, indeed!

But all that's a different story. The only thing that's pertinent here is that in some manner or other, the fish oil plant was closed up—and the enterprise faded from the picture. After the plant was abandoned, Furman and Charles Whitaker took from it two circular iron presses, weighing 150 pounds each, which they used for ballast in their schooner *Ruby*.

Sarasota had another promising enterprise during the late Seventies—The Lancaster Cedar Bucket Plant, started by Israel and Morris Lancaster, of Chicago, in 1877. The plant, a two-story building, was built on high ground close to the bay near what is now Cunliff Lane. A large amount of machinery, bought in Baltimore, was installed. All kinds of cedar pails, casks and firkins were made. The firkins were especially well made, with brass hoops and decorations, designed to serve as ornaments as well as containers. The cedar used in the plant was obtained from the cedar forests on Longboat and Siesta Keys.

Mrs. Fannie Crocker Curtis, who remembers the plant well, says it did

a flourishing business until 1881 when Israel Lancaster died. He was the "brains" of the concern as well as the most skilled workman. After his death, Israel Lancaster, Jr., and Morris sold their property to Mrs. Mary B. Bidwell, of Buffalo, and the machinery was shipped to Cedar Keys on the *Ben S. Curry*. Mrs. Bidwell's husband, Alfred, then opened a general merchandise store in the former bucket factory.

Remember that name—Alfred Bidwell! It figures prominently in one of the most tragic and sordid episodes in Sarasota's history. So do the names of two other men, Dr. Leonard F. Andrews, of Cass County, Iowa, and Jason L. Alford, of Georgia. Dr. Andrews came here for his health in 1881 and homesteaded in the Bee Ridge area east of Phillippi Creek. Alford homesteaded on the bay front near the present Siesta Key bridge.

Dr. Andrews was an ardent booster of the Land of Sarasota. He wanted this region to get publicity. To help, he wrote a letter to the *Florida Agriculturist* which appeared in the September 22, 1882 issue. It read: "Sara Sota has never been mentioned in your paper. It should be. We have a beautiful bay, 15 miles long, averaging two miles wide, with immense amounts of fish, clams and oysters. The town of Sara Sota takes its name from the bay and is a new place just starting, and a prominent point on the line of shipping to and from Key West and Cedar Keys. The Florida Fish Oil and Guana Co. is located here. We have good mail communication and transportation. Land is good. Anything can be grown successfully. Already there are many fine orange groves in this section which will compare favorably with those in any part of Florida."

This booster of Sara Sota, Dr. Andrews, enjoyed a fine reputation in Iowa. Here, he was respected by the entire community. And yet he was one of the ringleaders of the Vigilantes. Why? Let's discuss that puzzling question in another chapter.

### *At the Close of a Period*

The year 1883 stands out as the year which saw the end of a bright period in the history of the Land of Sarasota—the end of the period of rapid colonization of the back country. Reasons why will be discussed later. Here, we merely want to give a brief word-picture of the Sarasota region as it was when 1883 drew to a close.

First, let's look at the northern part of what is now Sarasota County. It was there John L. Edwards had his fish ranch. A little farther north lived Dr. J. J. Dunham and his four daughters.

In 1882 Dr. Dunham and Edwards started an ambitious undertaking, the growing of pineapples on a large scale. The doctor brought a schooner of pineapple plants into the bay and planted them on a tract he and Edwards cleared near the present Whitfield Estates. The pineapples flour-

ished—but the undertaking died. Because of a lack of railroads, the fruit could not be shipped to northern markets at a profit, in the face of competition from Cuba and the Bahamas. So the venture was abandoned.

Just north of the Dunhams, on the bay, lived General John J. Riggin, of St. Louis, who had served on the staff of General Grant during the Civil War. While with the Union army at Charleston, the general met a young widow, a Mrs. Lamb. They married and in 1876 came here to live so the bride could escape criticism from the Charlestonians for having married a "damned Yankee." Mrs. Lamb had a small son, George, who was adopted by the general and was known thereafter as George Riggin.

During the Eighties George was a dashing young blade among the younger set of Manatee. Later on, he settled down to work and helped his father start a sixty-acre orange grove, the largest in this section at that time. The grove is still in existence and is known as the Buffum Grove. In 1890 he was appointed census enumerator for Manatee County, which then included the present Sarasota County, and he covered the entire territory on horseback, visiting every family. For his work he received forty cents an hour. It's not recorded how long the job lasted.

George had a horse named Paddy which was as well known throughout the Land of Sarasota as George himself. Paddy was a beautiful, black gelding which George had trained to do almost everything but talk. When he went deer hunting, George used his saddle as a rifle mount and Paddy would stand so still that George boasted he never missed a shot.

Down the bay, the Whitaker "clan" dominated a large area. In the Indian Beach region, lived John Helveston and his wife, the former Nancy Catherine Stuart Whitaker, at Alzartie Acres, and a little farther south, Dr. and Mrs. Furman Whitaker, at Yellow Bluffs. In the William Whitaker home, there lived Mr. and Mrs. Whitaker and six of their unmarried children.

On the bay front, in what is now the heart of the city of Sarasota, only one family lived, Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Willard and Willard's brother, Charles.

Then came the community known as Sara Sota, bounded roughly on the north by Hudson Bayou and on the south by Phillippi Creek. In 1883 there were two stores in the settlement, one operated by the postmaster, Charles E. Abbe, and the second by Alfred Bidwell. In the Florida State Gazeteer and Business Directory the following land owners in Sara Sota were listed: Dr. L. F. Andrews, Charles E. Abbe, Dr. Myron Abbe, J. F. Bartholf, Mrs. Mary Bartholf, J. Boardman, Peter Crocker, R. G. Cunliff, T. H. B. Dunnegan, Mrs. Emma Ellis, Robert Greer, Eliza Greer, Mrs. Emma Greer, Peter Hanson, Miss A. E. Harper, J. B. Hutchings, Anna M. Johnson, J. C. Jeffcott, J. C. Jones, John Liddell, W. E. Loper, A. Lack-

zonski, William Mathew, Robert Roberts, Charles L. Davis and Susan S. Staples.

Those were the listed property owners in 1883. In addition to them there were many families which were missed by the *Gazeteer* or had not yet acquired title to their properties. Included among these were the families of: Joseph C. Anderson, Jason L. Alford, Joseph Woodruff, Love Johnson, J. L. Iverson, O. N. Foster, Thomas Dryman, Dr. Adam W. Hunter, Alfred P. Bidwell, Council and Miles A. Brown, Louis Cato, Dr. George Hayden, A. E. Pooser, W. J. Drumwright, Charles M. Robinson and E. B. Grantham.

Farther down the bay and in the Osprey region lived the families of: William Brunson, John S. Blackburn, Judge John G. Webb, E. R. Marsh, Dr. J. H. Bissell, W. A. Bacon, J. M. Clower, Frank Guptill, William Lowe, S. C. Bullard, D. Garrett, J. H. Hill, Robert S. Griffith, James Bradley and Ezekial Dryman. Bacon was listed in the *Gazeteer* as an oyster dealer, George and John S. Blackburn as fish dealers, Miss Mattie Clower as a teacher, Frank Guptill and William Lowe as boat builders, Judge Webb as postmaster and proprietor of Webb's Winter Resort, and W. B. Webb as ship master.

In the region now known as Venice-Nokomis the Knight family was almost supreme. By this time several of the daughters and sons had married and established families of their own. Frances had become the wife of Charles Curry, Florence the wife of Harvey Hill, Rebecca Caroline the wife of A. Alfred Wrede, Martha the wife of Lacount Lowe, and Alice the wife of Darwin O. Curry, the first postmaster of the town of Venice. Two sons of Knight had become prominent cattlemen, L. J. and Jesse Joshiah. James Z. Knight had married and was living near Plant City; Sara Jane was the wife of Shadrick Hancock, and Ann the wife of George Brown. Fred R. had moved to Bradenton.

The only "interlopers" in the Knight stronghold were members of the Frank Higel family which included six sons: Frank, Jr., Harry L., Ralph, Eugene, George and Wesley. Special mention must be made of this man Higel. He was a most unusual character.

Born in Philadelphia, Higel became a skilled chemist and discovered a process by which starch could be obtained profitably from the roots of the cassava, a plant which had been grown here successfully by early pioneers. He described his discovery to Hamilton Disston, Philadelphia saw manufacturer, who had purchased, a short time previously, 4,000,000 acres in Florida at 25 cents an acre. Arrangements were made for Higel to go to the Venice area, where some of Disston's holdings were located, and try out this process on an experimental basis. He came here in the winter of 1883-84 and located on the old Drew homestead.

During the following year, Higel grew a large quantity of cassavas. Digging up the roots, he began converting them into starch in a small plant he had erected. His process worked. Higel was jubilant and he sat down immediately and wrote Disston a long letter telling all about his successful experiments. In Philadelphia, Disston read the letter with satisfaction and immediately purchased enough equipment to go into the starch manufacturing business on a large scale.

The machinery was sent by rail to Tampa which had shortly before become the southern terminus of Henry B. Plant's railroad system. Disston arrived in Tampa soon afterwards and was met there by Higel. The two men took rooms in a tiny, unheated hotel, the best Tampa then had to offer. They began figuring just how to proceed with the new undertaking. Everything looked fine. Some of Disston's enormous holdings could be profitably used and Higel's invention would be hailed throughout the country! And riches would be his!

But that night—the night of January 10, 1886—fate intervened to upset their plans. It was the coldest night in Florida's history. It snowed and the temperature dropped to 23 degrees above zero. Disston had left his winter clothes at Jacksonville and there were no heavy blankets in the hotel. All night long he lay shivering. When dawn broke he looked outside and saw a rain barrel which had been frozen solid. Icicles hung from the roof and snow almost covered the ground. Disston was completely disgusted. Florida, in his opinion, was not a fit state in which to grow successfully semi-tropical plants. He packed his bags and headed back north. Before he left he gave orders for the starch-making machinery to be returned to Philadelphia. And so ended Higel's dreams of riches and success.

Discouraged, but not defeated, Higel returned to Venice and began manufacturing a high grade cane syrup which in later years was in great demand throughout the Sarasota region. He also made citrus and guava jellies and marmalades. Higel's sons grew to manhood and played prominent parts in the development of Sarasota and Venice. In 1888, when the Horse and Chaise community got its first postoffice, Higel suggested the name of Venice as being most appropriate because of the network of bayous and creeks. The government accepted the name. Higel died while on a trip to Philadelphia in 1891.

Three small but prosperous inland communities came into existence during the period from 1867 to 1883. They were Bee Ridge, Fruitville and Myakka.

Isaac A. Redd, the first settler at Bee Ridge, was followed during the next few years by a dozen families which "squatted" or homesteaded within a few miles of his home. Included among these settlers were: A. J.

Tatum, Henry Hawkins, Charles Hawk, William Mink, Harrison T. "Tip" Riley, Sebe C. Rawls, W. D. Burgess, John M. Tippet and John Fletcher.

The first settler of what is now known as Fruitville was Charles L. Reaves who homesteaded there in 1876. Thomas Hoover came two years later. Other early settlers there were Jesse H. Tucker and his two sons Emmett and Frank H. Born in Lake City, Tucker moved to Pine Level soon after the end of the war and bought forty acres of land. It was good citrus land but not good for gardening. He heard of a man living at Fruitville who wanted to grow oranges but hesitated planting them in that locality because he thought it was so close to the Gulf that the salt air would damage the trees. The two men got together and swapped land, Tucker getting eighty acres in Fruitville for his forty acres in Pine Level. He moved to Fruitville in 1880.

William Albert Bartholomew, a Kansas attorney, settled at Fruitville in 1881 with his wife Susanna and three children. He homesteaded 120 acres. Before the claim was proved up, Bartholomew was fatally injured while hunting egrets in the Myakka River valley. He climbed a tree to look for nesting birds; a limb broke and he fell, breaking his back. Paralyzed, he was carried home; his condition gradually became worse and he died five months later. His widow lived on the property long enough to prove up the homestead claim and then moved into Sarasota.

The settlement of Myakka is one of the oldest in what is now Sarasota County. Shadrick Hancock moved there during the Civil War to care for Jesse Knight's cattle, driven to the Myakka plains to prevent their being stolen by Union raiders. Garrett "Dink" Murphy followed Hancock soon after the war was ended, bringing a herd of cattle with him from his home in Madison County.

Another Myakka pioneer was Augustus M. Wilson, a native of Thomas County, Georgia. Homesteading, he planted an orange grove and began raising a herd of cattle. Later, when more settlers drifted in, he opened the first general merchandise store in that section and also became the community's first postmaster. By the end of the century he had become one of the leading cattlemen of Florida and one of the leading politicians of this section, serving one term in the state senate and three terms in the state house of representatives.

Other pioneers of Myakka were: John W. Jackson, who served as justice of the peace, and George Tatum, Jr., wheelwright and blacksmith. Landowners listed in the *Gazeteer* of 1884 were: T. Dougherty, W. N. Hayes, Mrs. M. A. Hancock, George A. Lamb, William Lowe, G. A. Cason, J. Havel and W. E. Stephens, in addition to Wilson, Hancock and Murphy.

## CHAPTER 4

### LIFE AMONG THE PIONEERS

A flutter with excitement and almost out of breath, Mrs. Joe Anderson stamped up the steps of the Peter Crocker home one sunny afternoon in October, 1877. "Sophia!" she called. "Where are you?" Busy at work in her garden, Mrs. Crocker heard the call and came into the house.

Mrs. Anderson could hardly wait to tell the most exciting bit of news she had heard for months.

"Would you believe it, Sophia," she exclaimed. "This morning I was over at Mary Bidwell's home. And what do you think I saw her husband doing? Putting up an iron cook stove! On my word of honor! A real iron cook stove with an oven right inside it! I've heard tell of them there stoves—but I never thought I'd live to see one!"

Mrs. Crocker marveled. "Goodness me, isn't that wonderful! Now Mrs. Bidwell won't have to bother around with a scaffold stove any longer! She'll be able to cook inside her house! I've just got to go over and see that stove. Let's go right now!"

The two women, with aprons flapping, trudged over to the Bidwell homestead, on the old sandy trail to Horse and Chaise. As they approached the house, they saw women and children coming from all directions. The news had spread to all parts of the Land of Sarasota. "Mrs. Bidwell has a stove—a real iron cooking stove—with an oven in which she can bake her bread! Just imagine!"

All that day, Mrs. Bidwell was kept busy exhibiting her new stove and telling all about it. She showed the big firebox where a roaring fire could be built, and the deep oven where a half dozen loaves of bread could be baked, all at once. The Sarasota women oh-ed and ah-ed, as women have done since time began at every new invention which simplified their work. They went home determined that they too must have iron cooking stoves—and that night their husbands were told in no uncertain terms to get them. Or else!

That was the way iron cooking stoves first came to the Sarasota region. Prior to then, the pioneer women always had cooked on so-called scaffold-stoves in detached "kitchens" at the rear of their homes. A few cooked on open hearths during the winter months but during the long summers, hearth fires made the homes unbearably hot, so all the women then used the scaffold stoves out in the open.

These scaffold stoves were crude affairs. One was constructed by building a frame of pine logs about three feet high and four feet square. Inside this frame, and on top of it, sand was poured. The logs were covered, on the outside, with clay or marl, so they would not burn. The cooking fire was built on top of the sand. Pine "light wood" splinters, rich in turpentine, were used in starting the fires. Once started, the fire was fed with hard wood which burned long and gave out intense heat.

Sometimes the scaffold stove was sheltered with a wood-covered roof, high enough off the ground so there was little danger of its catching fire from flying sparks. Such shelters, sometimes further protected with wind-breaks, were dignified by the name of "detached kitchens."

A few of the pioneers boasted of having iron grills for their scaffold stoves on which meat could be broiled or skillets placed. But most of the women placed the skillets and their Dutch ovens alongside the blazing fire. Both types of utensils had iron legs about four inches long. Around and between these legs, the women heaped glowing embers, to provide more heat.

A primitive way of cooking, sure enough, but descendants of the pioneers still enthuse over the delicious meals their grandmothers or mothers prepared for them. And why not? Food—the best of food—was abundant for all, and most of it didn't cost a cent!

In the waters of Sarasota Bay and Little Sarasota Bay were some of the finest oyster beds in America; oysters famed throughout the state for their exquisite flavor. The bays were also famous for their delicious clams and scallops. And stone crabs. Enough shell food for a dozen meals could be gathered in less than a half hour.

As for fish—well, tales by the children of pioneers are almost unbelievable. "You could hardly row across to one of the keys without ending up with a dozen or so fish in your boat," asserts Arthur B. Edwards. "The fish were so thick you'd hit them with your oars, and into the boat they'd flop!"

Edwards tells of schools of fish so large they almost filled the bay. He remembers one school which entered the bay in the morning, kept moving northward all day long, and was still in sight when darkness fell. No wonder Sarasota Bay was considered one of the best fishing spots in the entire world! A real fisherman's paradise, if there ever was one!

In the old days, most of the pioneers liked mullet more than other fish. But if they preferred pompano, or trout, or red fish, or any one of a hundred other species, all they had to do was go out in a boat for an hour or so, cast a net or fish a while, and come back loaded down.

The woods and swamps were just as filled with game as the waters were with fish. Deer, gray and fox squirrels, coons, opossum, turkeys,

quail, blue wing teal, wood and brindle ducks, green-necked Mallards, wood ibis, curlews, and gannetts, better known as "Methodist preachers." There was never a time, winter or summer, when a pioneer couldn't go out into the woods and "shoot a meal" for his family out of the nearest thicket.

For several years, one man, Joe Anderson, kept nearly all the families in the Sara Sota community supplied with game. He had a double-barrelled shotgun and he liked nothing better than to hunt. He would go out early in the morning, at sun-up, and be back at nine o'clock with all the game he could carry. Usually he would shoot a deer close in—so his neighbors could walk to it in a few minutes and get their steaks and roasts—for nothing! That was the kind of a meat-man who deserves to be recorded in history!

The Whitakers' colored man, Jeff Bolden, was an ardent hunter. Whenever Mrs. Whitaker wanted something extra good for guests, Jeff would say: "Missie, how'd you like a fine, little, fat spike-horn buck for those folks that's comin'?" And if Mrs. Whitaker would say "that's fine", Jeff would grab his rifle and amble off. Within an hour or so, a shot would be heard and then Mrs. Whitaker would know for sure what her meal was going to be. And sure enough, Jeff soon would be back with a young spike-horn buck on his shoulder.

'Tis said De Soto first brought hogs into Florida. If that's the case, then the pioneers should have erected a monument in his memory. Because the woods swarmed with razorback hogs, reputed to be the descendants of the hogs De Soto brought. They weren't handsome swine but they were certainly good to eat after they had been penned and fattened.

They provided an abundance of fresh pork, to say nothing of smoked hams and sausage, cured to perfection in smokehouses where slow hickory fires burned. "Hams made here in Sarasota equalled any ever made in old Virginia," avows Frank Tucker, one of the oldest of the surviving pioneers. "And you should have tasted that sausage my mother used to make! It was perfect! My mouth still waters when I think of it."

The razorbacks also provided lard for cooking, and that really meant something in the days when housewives couldn't go over to the corner grocery store and buy any one of a dozen brands of cooking oils or fats.

Hogs were so numerous that the Whitakers rounded them up several times a year, just to keep them out of gardens, and penned them near the creek at the south end of their property. When several hundred were in the pens, the Whitakers would load them onto rafts near the mouth of the creek, take them out to a schooner in the bay, and ship them to Key West, where they were sold at a good price. Because of the use of

the marshy land along the creek for hog pens, the creek was named Hog Creek, and it bears that name today.

With nearly a year-round growing season, the pioneers had no trouble raising all the vegetables they needed. Every home had its sweet potato patch and enough potatoes could be grown in a half acre or so to supply the largest family. Nearly all the settlers also grew their own peas, and corn, and beans. A few went in heavily for sugar cane which was taken to Webb's mill and converted into syrup and sugar. Settlers who didn't have land suitable for growing cane got their sweets at Webb's in exchange for other products.

One thing the pioneers rarely had was good butter—that is, fresh butter. A few had milch cows and churns and made butter occasionally. But to keep butter fresh in this climate, without ice, was impossible. However, the women did the best they could. After churning, they would put the butter in a wooden bucket and bury it in a shady spot in wet sand, and keep moist cloths on top of it. But in no time the butter would become rancid. This was no particular hardship to the pioneers; in fact, many of them became so used to rancid butter that they insisted fresh butter didn't have any "flavor." And they wouldn't touch it until it became a little "ripe."

In the days of the pioneers, the people didn't bother about stylish clothes. "All that a man needed then," later wrote George "Nemo" Higel in the Sarasota Times, "was a hickory shirt, a pair of dungarees and brogans for his feet. The needs of the women were just as simple. It's a good thing they were because if the women would have wanted fancy duds, they wouldn't have had the money to buy them. In those days, a silver dollar looked as big as a cartwheel."

The needs of the women may have been "simple," as Nemo said, but even so, clothing they had to have, not only for themselves but for their children. And it wasn't a simple job even to get the cloth from which the clothes could be made. The nearest store which handled drygoods was at Manatee and to go there and back, by ox-cart or horse-and-buggy, over the sandy trails, usually meant a two-day trip.

Often several families would go together and camp out overnight on the outskirts of Manatee. There the women would meet and exchange gossip with the townfolks while the men made merry with their cronies. Often much too merry. Manatee County always was a dry county but, even so, old timers say they don't remember the time when they had to leave Manatee with a thirst. Quenching thirsts often took all night long, 'tis said, and, as a result, there were many a headache after some of those shopping trips to Manatee.

But regardless of the headaches, the women got the cloth they prized

so highly. Then all they had to do was sew the garments. For many years, that was a long and tedious task because all the work had to be done by hand. But in 1878, Mrs. Peter Crocker had her precious Singer sewing machine, given to her as a wedding present, sent here from her mother's home in Key West where she had left it until she became settled.

After that, making clothes became sort of a social event. Neighbors for miles around gathered every week or so in the Crocker home. Then, while chatting about all the "blessed events" in prospect, and other choice bits of chit-chat, the neighbors would cut and baste while Mrs. Crocker sewed the garments on that marvelous gadget which worked like magic! The sewing machine was even more of a seven-day wonder than Mrs. Bidwell's iron cooking stove, and it saved innumerable hours of toil for Sara Sota's pioneers.

Several references have been made here to women "gossiping." They had to gossip. If they hadn't, they would never have learned any news. Up until the Eighties, no newspapers were published anywhere in this region, even at Manatee. Two weekly papers were published at Tampa but they contained no Manatee-Sarasota news; so, few people here subscribed to them. It wasn't until 1899 that a regular weekly paper—and a mighty good one—was started in the town of Sarasota by C. V. S. Wilson, founder of the Sarasota Times. After that the women didn't have to gossip—or at least, not much!

Newspapers were not the only present-day "necessities" which the pioneers lacked back in the early Eighties. They had to get along without countless things now considered essential.

None of the homes, for instance, had glass in the windows, or even wire screens. The windows had heavy wooden shutters which swung on home-made, wooden hinges which creaked and groaned when strong winds blew. In warm weather, the shutters were thrown back and the homes often swarmed with flies and mosquitoes.

The mosquitoes were the bane of the pioneers' existence. During the rainy season, when the flat-wood lands stood covered with water for weeks, the mosquitoes bred by the billion and they often made life almost unbearable. Some of the pioneers developed an immunity to their bites but others didn't—and they scratched and scratched, and cursed and cursed. But cursing didn't drive the 'skeeters away. They kept on coming until the rainy season ended.

In attempts to repel the pests, smudge fires were burned in front of every home. Old timers assert they often succeeded in driving away almost all the mosquitoes by feeding the fires with cow-chips. In those days, cow-chips were just as widely acclaimed for their mosquito-repellant powers as DDT is today. But the old-timers ruefully agree that the

smoldering cow-chips didn't smell "none too good." When they went to bed, the pioneers slept under cotton-mesh netting to get a little peace.

The mosquitoes caused much sickness, back in those days when they were not suspected of being the carriers of malaria and yellow fever. So far as is known, the Sarasota region escaped all the yellow fever epidemics which caused many deaths in other localities in Florida. But almost everyone suffered from malaria, or "chills and fever", as it was then called. The disease was not eliminated until years later when the worst mosquito-breeding places were drained and malarial cases were quarantined.

Fortunately, the mosquito season lasted only a few months, at the very longest. During the remainder of the year, the pioneers could sit in their homes at night and read by the light of "button lamps." Those button lamps were quite an invention—every "modern" home had at least two or three. Such a lamp was made by taking a large button and covering it with a piece of heavy cloth, the ends of which were left to dangle in a bowl of "fish-head oil", obtained, as the name implies, by boiling the oil out of heads of fish. After the cloth-covered button was coated with oil, the pioneer would touch a burning stick to the top of it and, presto, a splendid light would dispel the darkness. A light that was good enough, anyhow, to read passages from the Bible, so what more was needed?

Kerosene lamps didn't come to the Sarasota section until the middle Eighties when a store which handled kerosene was opened for the Scotch colonists. Oil stoves were unknown here until after the turn of the century. Then Nemo wrote in the Sarasota Times: "I just bought my wife one of those new kerosene stoves and, by cracky, she's now treating me just as nice as she did back in our courting days!"

One of the most onerous tasks of the pioneers was making soap. The necessary grease was obtained from the always-useful razorback hogs. That was fairly easy. But then came the job of getting lye. For many years the pioneers had to make their own by leaching the ashes of burned hickory logs, and that took time and skill.

With both grease and lye finally ready, the pioneer woman then proceeded to make her soap. "And if you think that was easy, just you go and try it some time!" ejaculates Mrs. George Blackburn, one of the oldest living pioneer women. "I'll never forget how we used to toil to get the soap we needed. But we got it and always managed to keep our families clean. Just as clean as any mother does today, with all her fancy toilet soaps and such. Our home-made soap didn't smell like perfume but it certainly got rid of the dirt."

There was one other "necessity" the pioneers sadly lacked—easily obtainable cash money. As Nemo said, a silver dollar looked as large as a cart-wheel in those early days. In fact, there were mighty few silver dollars

in the entire region. During the Seventies and early Eighties, most of the money was "foreign"—Spanish doubloons and Cuban change, obtained from the sale of cattle and produce at Key West. And this treasure was possessed only by the favored few. Many of the pioneers, who had little to sell for the Cuban trade, often had no money of any kind.

Frank Tucker tells how hard it was to earn money in those early days. After he married, he wanted to build a home that would be worthy of his pretty bride. Not just a plain log cabin. He wanted "lumber-mill" rafters, siding, and, above all, some of that splendid tongue-groove flooring he had seen at Manatee. But the lumber he needed would cost twenty dollars! That was a lot of money! A young fortune! Tucker had no idea how he would ever get such a handsome sum.

However, luck was with him. The county commissioners decided to open up a road between Fruitville and Bee Ridge and they advertised for bids. Here was Tucker's opportunity and he leaped at it. He agreed to do the work for half a cent a yard—cut down the trees, hack away the underbrush, grub out the roots and open the road. All that for half a cent a yard! The job took him months but he got it finished, and he was paid off with a Spanish doubloon and some change. Almost exactly twenty dollars, just the sum he needed to pay for that lumber he so badly wanted. And the Tucker home was built, a monument to the back-breaking job of opening two miles of road! In that home, Frank and his beloved wife Eunice lived happily for many years.

Back in the early Eighties there was not a town or even what might be called a village in the entire Land of Sarasota.

Mention has been made of the "communities" of Sara Sota, Horse and Chaise, Osprey, Bee Ridge, Fruitville and Myakka. They were merely groupings of widely scattered homes—nothing more. Not one had a graded road, a sidewalk, a community meeting place, or anything resembling public improvements. The only churches in what is now Sarasota County were a tiny log cabin at Bee Ridge with half a dozen members and another tiny church at Horse and Chaise. There was not one paid teacher or paid minister in the entire region.

In 1883, Bidwell's store, on the bay near the foot of Cunliff Lane, was the largest south of Manatee but it carried less than \$200 worth of merchandise. The stock consisted merely of barrels of sugar, corn meal, grits, green coffee, and flour; a few boxes of plug tobacco and block matches, and a few kegs of nails and one of gunpowder, for guns and blasting. No packaged or canned goods, no drygoods, no hardware—not even any bottled Cokes. Truly, the Land of Sarasota was a primitive, frontier community.

The only postoffice along the coast in the Sarasota Bay region was at Abbe's store, located on the present Osprey Avenue near Hillview, almost directly east of a point of land jutting out into the bay a little below Hudson Bayou. This point was designated as Postoffice Point on government maps, not because a post office was located there but because settlers beached their boats at the point, when coming by water, to go over to Abbe's to get their mail.

As for roads, real roads, there were none. From Manatee southward a trail wound through the woods, skirting swamps and heads of bayous, to the Whitaker home, following the path made years before when Bill Whitaker rode horseback almost every night to court Mary Jane Wyatt in Manatee. Sometimes this trail was fairly good but more often, it wasn't. During the rainy season, buggies and ox-carts often sank to their axles in bogs and during dry spells, the wheels sank in powdery, clutching sand.

Below the Whitakers, the trail zigzagged and twisted through the woods to the vicinity of the present intersection of Central Avenue and Eighth Street. Here it forked, one branch going southwest to the fish oil plant on the bay, another branch straight south, and a third branch which followed a course a little farther inland. From these "trunklines", other trails forked, one to Fruitville, another to Bee Ridge, and a third, which dodged the deepest part of Phillippi Creek, to Horse and Chaise, the locality now known as Venice and Nokomis.

On none of the trails were there any bridges. All bayous and creeks had to be forded and often, when the water was high, this was a precarious undertaking. Almost every old settler reports having gotten "dunked" more than once while crossing a swollen stream.

At Hudson Bayou there was a "foot-way." It was constructed in 1875 after the women had complained to their husbands for months about getting wet every time they wanted to "visit" back and forth across the bayou. The men drove posts into the bed of the bayou, nailed crossbars to the posts, and then strung the foot-way, one plank wide, with no hand-rails. Mrs. Curtis laughingly asserts that more than one fair Sara Sota maiden was kissed for the first time on this foot-way. The maiden gave a kiss—or into the water she would "slip." Oh well, everything's fair in war—and love!

Because of the lack of good roads and bridges, nearly every family whose homestead fronted on the water owned a schooner, a sloop, or at the very least, a yawl. In those boats, they went to Manatee to buy, or trade for, the supplies they needed. The schooners were used to take produce to Key West and Cedar Keys for sale, and later on, to Tampa.

The lack of good roads did not prevent the pioneers from congregating often at neighbors' homes for prayer meetings or for socials, or just to

exchange the latest news of the day. Picnics usually were held at White Beach, a narrow point on the bay-side of Siesta Key, near the present Stickney Point bridge. This beach was then noted for its hard-packed, sparkling sand and it made an ideal swimming place, preferred to the open Gulf. At White Beach, scores of Sara Sota's boys and girls first learned to swim. The trip to the beach was made from the mainland by rowboat—no bridges to the key were built until years later.

Little Sarasota Bay, in the vicinity of White Beach, was noted for its oysters. Pioneers say the oysters there surpassed even those of Big Sarasota Bay, having a delicate flavor acclaimed by the most discriminating epicures. In this region, on both the Gulf and bay sides of Siesta Key, the pioneers turned their turtles, big fellows weighing two hundred pounds and more. Steaks from these turtles were said to be more delicious than any other meat obtainable, then or now.

The Land of Sarasota, in the days before 1883, was a land of glowing prospects; a land where settlers were friendly and always ready to rally around and help when a helping hand was needed; a land where crime was unknown and no one dreamed of locking doors, even when leaving for a week or more. It was a land of primitive homes and primitive communities, true enough, but it was a happy land.

And, then, overnight it seemed, the Land of Sarasota became torn by bitter passion and seething anger. It became a place where men became blind with hatred and rage—and ganged together to commit two of the most cold-blooded murders in the history of the state. The Vigilantes were on the march!

## CHAPTER 5

### IN THE DAYS OF THE VIGILANTES

A BLIGHT fell upon the Land of Sarasota during 1883. Not a blight which could be called an act of God but a blight for which man himself was responsible. It was caused by land speculators working in connivance with government agents.

Before the blight occurred, thousands upon thousands of acres of good fertile land were available here for homesteaders—the rugged pioneers who were eager to colonize and develop the frontier, providing they were able to obtain land by building a home and tilling the soil.

But by the end of 1883, almost every acre of the rich public domain in what is now Sarasota County passed into the hands of land speculators, given to them for a pittance by the Florida Internal Improvement Board under the pretense of freeing the state from debt or “developing transportation.”

Photo  
Not  
Available

#### DID THE VIGILANTES PLAN A MURDER HERE?

Members of the Sara Sota Vigilance Committee were accused of having planned the murder of Postmaster Charles R. Abbe on Christmas Day, 1884, in this home of Alfred Bidwell, on the present Tamiami Trail. The home is now owned by Miss Ethel Wood, a winter resident of Sarasota since 1896.

Here's what happened in Manatee County, which then embraced the present Sarasota County: On June 12, 1883, Governor William D. Bloxham signed a deed giving title of 246,052 acres of land to the Florida Land & Improvement Co., headed by Hamilton Disston, saw manufacturer of Philadelphia. Exactly one week later, Bloxham gave title to 271,796 more acres of Manatee County land to the Florida Southern Railroad Co.

More and more grants followed. A battalion of attorneys and abstractors would be needed to ferret out the complex details of all the transactions. But the Manatee County tax rolls of 1888, the earliest which can be found, give an inkling of how this region's public lands were tossed away.

The 1888 tax rolls show that the Florida Commercial Co. then owned 281,078 acres; the Southern Florida Railroad Co., 103,078 acres; the Jacksonville, Tampa & Key West Railroad Co., 74,200 acres; the Florida Land & Improvement Co., 53,129 acres; the Florida Land & Mortgage Co., Ltd., of Great Britain, 137,390 acres, and the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co., Ltd., another British concern, 48,971 acres. That's a total of 697,846 acres, a princely province if there ever was one.

There's nothing mysterious, but many things which are suspicious, about the manner in which the land grabbers gained possession of this tremendous acreage. Here's what happened:

Under the provisions of the Homestead Act of 1862, practically all land in the federal public domain suitable for occupation was opened for colonization. That meant, in effect, that homesteaders could get land in Florida, as well as in other frontier states, by coming here and settling for five years or more. As a result of that Act, colonizers flocked southward and the development of the Land of Sarasota was rapid, the same as elsewhere in South Florida.

But there was a loophole in federal laws which enabled Florida politicians to deal the Homestead Act a mortal blow, so far as this state was concerned. Unfortunately, the federal government did not retain title to all the public lands. It had agreed, under the provisions of the Swamp Land Act, passed in 1850, to give each state all swamp and overflow lands which lay within its borders, for such disposition as the state desired. It was clearly specified that each forty-acre tract must be so overflowed, either at the time of the planting or harvesting season, that it could not be freed from water without artificial drainage.

That Swamp Land Act, juggled around by clever schemers, made it possible for Florida politicians to dissipate the public domain here in what has been termed "shameless disregard to the future welfare of the state." In "clever deals" with federal agents, the state politicians ultimately succeeded in having some 22,000,000 acres classified as "swamp land"—more

than half the state. At least 10,000,000 of those 22,000,000 acres were high and dry, but so much the better for the politicians. They could make that much better terms with the land grabbers!

One of the first of the transactions which directly affected Manatee County, and consequently the Sarasota County of today, was the agreement made with Disston, on May 20, 1881, to sell him 4,000,000 acres at 25 cents an acre, or \$1,000,000. Of that amount, Disston later paid \$500,000 and the other \$500,000 was paid by British and Dutch capitalists headed by Sir Edward James Reed.

The grant was made ostensibly to free the state of a debt of \$644,300 still owed on a \$3,527,000 bond issue previously issued to induce railroad construction. Before the sale was completed, the outstanding bonds could be, and were, purchased at from 20 to 30 cents on the dollar. After the deal, the bonds were paid off at par. Who made the clean-up? Well, you figure that one out yourself.

In the Disston deal, and those which followed in rapid succession, the Land of Sarasota was practically wiped off the map so far as homesteaders were concerned. The land grabbers grabbed at least 90 per cent of the 328,960 acres now included in Sarasota County. Exactly how much has never been definitely established.

The deeds for the acreage here, given to the speculators by the state in 1883, included huge tracts which were free from standing water at all seasons of the year. The land was turned over in contiguous 640-acre sections—almost conclusive proof that each 40-acre tract was not separately examined, as the Swamp Land Act required.

Into the possession of the land grabbers went land, in the Sarasota County of today, on which scores of families lived. Good land, fertile land—land on which citrus groves and gardens had been planted. By no stretch of the imagination could this land be called "swamp land"—but the speculators got it just the same.

Many of the pioneers whose lands were deeded to the speculators had not filed homestead claims because they did not know the exact "land map" location of their holdings—they did not know how to describe them as precisely as the law required. Other pioneers, who had been just "squatting", had delayed filing claims because they did not believe there was any need for hurrying. Besides, "claim-jumping" in this region was unknown. Everyone respected the other fellow's rights.

The grants to the speculators came as a stunning blow to the pioneers. At first they could not believe such disaster could befall them. Surely the state would not deprive them of land on which they had worked for years, building a home and cultivating the soil! That would be robbery! Said

Joe Anderson to a neighbor: "Don't tell me Bloxham would do a thing like that—why I voted for him!"

But Joe Anderson and the others soon learned that the first reports of the land grants were only too true. Late in 1883, agents for the speculators began putting on the pressure. They had big deals with other speculators in sight and they didn't want squatters around with claims which might cloud their titles. Particularly squatters living close to the bay on much-desired "outlet" land which bottled up their vast inland holdings. The land grabbers began threatening ouster proceedings.

A Hudson Bayou squatter came to the Crocker home one day and exclaimed: "Pete, they're trying to get my home. They may get it, but by God they'll only get it over my dead body!"

To make matters worse for the Sara Sotans, the land grabbers formed an alliance with some of the big cattlemen. The two groups had great ideological differences, to be sure, but the Sara Sotans were their "common enemy." The land grabbers wanted the squatters and potential homesteaders off the land so they could get clear title to their newly-acquired domain. The cattlemen wanted to hamstring the Sara Sotans as much as possible to prevent them from encroaching upon the open range, the sacred grazing grounds.

Both the land grabbers and cattlemen had great influence at Manatee where many of the leading politicians and county officials lived, even when the county seat was at Pine Level, forty-two miles inland. The cattlemen were intermarried with many of Manatee's oldest families and leading citizens. The agents of the land grabbers won friends because they lived in a grand manner at the newly-opened Warren Hotel, in adjoining Bradenton, and were always diplomatic—oh, so very much nicer and more cultivated than those rough pioneers at Sara Sota!

The alliance between the cattlemen and land speculators was cemented when the latter promised they would help at Tallahassee in squelching legislation designed to force cattlemen to keep their herds fenced in, away from gardens, farms and groves. After that agreement was reached, pressure against the Sara Sotans became more and more intense.

One day, early in January, 1884, Jason L. Alford, of Sara Sota, was arrested on a charge of stealing a cow. Alford was not a squatter. He owned two tracts of land, both purchased from the state. The land grabbers wanted his land. They also wanted him out of the way and if they could get him out of the way by sending him to jail—fine!

But their plans miscarried. Taken to court at Pine Level, Alford succeeded in proving conclusively that he had not been implicated in the cow-theft. He insisted the charge against him had been trumped up to cause him trouble and expense. He was acquitted. But from then on,

Alford was a bitter, implacable enemy of both the cattlemen and speculators.

The acquittal of Alford did not make things any easier for his fellow Sara Sotans. In fact, it served to intensify the feud, now developing into almost open warfare. The drive to "oust the squatters" was speeded up. More and more of them were threatened with eviction. This was tragedy—stark tragedy!

Sara Sota began to seethe with anger and resentment. Little groups began gathering at Bidwell's store on the bay—at the foot of Cunliff Lane. The men were grim and their faces were lined with worry. Their voices were low but their words were venomous. Every day, the community became more tense. A meeting was called at Alford's home. Seventeen pioneers attended. One after another the men got up and talked. They became inflamed with rage and indignation. They lost all reason.

It was at that meeting, held early in April, 1884, that a secret organization was formed—the Sara Sota Vigilance Committee.

The once peaceful, happy community of Sara Sota had become a community in which fires of wrath burned deep under the surface, ready to break forth at any instant. An air of foreboding hung over the region. Even women and children were effected. They went around tight-lipped and solemn.

"I was only a child then and I didn't know the cause of all the trouble," said Mrs. Fannie Crocker Curtis. "But I sensed that something was going to happen. And it did!"

### *Two Men Are Murdered*

Riding a small sorrel pony, Harrison T. "Tip" Riley jogged along a sandy trail leading from Bee Ridge to Abbe's post office early Monday morning, June 30, 1884.

It was a peaceful scene. Rays of the early morning sun, shining through the overhanging limbs of towering pines, made the trail ahead a lacey pattern of lights and shadows. A covey of quail flew into a nearby thicket. Squirrels chattered in the hickory trees. A deer ran across the road a hundred yards ahead.

Suddenly the tranquil setting changed. A shot gun roared. Then, in quick succession, there were two more blasts. Riley clutched his breast, slumped in his saddle, and then fell to the ground. Three men came running from a dense clump of palmettos, guns in hand. As they approached, Riley moaned and blindly tried to arise. One of the men shot again, this time from only ten feet away. Riley pitched forward and lay motionless.

"Be damned sure the old buzzard's dead!" yelled one of the men. "Don't worry, I'll fix him," responded a companion. From his belt he

drew a long knife, strode over to the dying man, grabbed him by his scraggly whiskers, turned back his head, and hacked at his throat.

"Lord, it's a good thing this knife is sharp," he said. "He's got the toughest damned hide I ever did see!"

The murderers did not remain long at the scene of the killing. While blood was still gushing from Riley's throat, they hurried away, headed for Phillippi Creek.

The shots of the guns were heard a half mile away by young Frank Tucker and his friend Theodore W. "Bud" Redd who were busy riving shingles for Tucker's new home at Fruitville. They saw thin wisps of smoke rise above the trees and vanish. But they did not think anything unusual had happened. Just a couple fellows out hunting, most likely. They proceeded making shingles.

But late that afternoon they learned a murder had been committed. Gus Riley, son of the slain man, came running to them and said his father had been killed. Tucker and Redd went to the spot where Riley lay dead in the road. Tucker spent the night sitting beside the dead man, most of the time with only a small boy for company.

A coroner's jury was impanelled that night by William A. Bartholomew, justice of the peace, and the scene of the crime was visited by the jurymen the next morning. They casually examined the body, went into a huddle, and a short time later returned the verdict: "Killed by parties unknown." Later it was learned nearly all the members of the jury were Vigilantes.

Reports of the murder quickly spread to all sections of the West Coast. In those days, cold-blooded killings were practically unheard of in this region. Deaths in drunken brawls, yes; but premeditated murder, almost never.

In the community of Sara Sota, only the women and the children talked about the crime, and then only in whispers. The men were strangely silent. They went on with their work as though nothing had happened. To all outward appearances, Sara Sota was just a community of peaceful, law-abiding pioneers.

But murderers were still at large and two days after Christmas, in the same year, they struck again.

This time, Charles E. Abbe, postmaster of Sara Sota, was the victim. He was fatally shot while gathering kelp for his orange grove on the bay front a little north of Cunliff Lane, near Bidwell's store.

Word of the second murder was carried to Manatee late that afternoon by a Mr. Moorehouse, a northerner who had been staying at the Abbe home and who was with the postmaster when he was killed.

Breathless and shaking from fright, Moorehouse reported: "Charles Willard shot Abbe and killed him. Another man was with Willard. I think it was Ed Bacon. They yelled to me to git—and I ran like hell. But I looked back and saw them put Abbe's body in a boat and start out in the bay."

Sheriff A. S. "Sandy" Watson did not need to be told who the murderers were. For months he had been hearing about the Sara Sota Vigilance Committee. "Traitors" had given him the names of its members and told him why the organization had been formed. He knew the men he would have to round up—and he knew they were men who might give him trouble.

So the sheriff recruited a posse of 26 men from the Manatee River section, friends of the cattlemen and the land agents, and he headed toward Sara Sota Bay. That night he arrested two of the Vigilantes. They submitted without a fight and were placed in jail at Manatee. Later, other Vigilantes were rounded up, one by one. Within a week, nineteen were jailed.

Two of the Vigilante leaders sought by Watson escaped. They were Willard, said to have shot Abbe, and Alford, the accused leader of the organization. The posse pursued Willard for nearly a month, as far south as Punta Gorda. Willard always managed to elude the sheriff's deputies. Finally, however, he gave himself up, surrendering at the home of Garrett Murphy, at Myakka. His feet were bleeding and he was nearly starved. Murphy, a fair and just man, promised to do what he could to see that Willard got a fair trial.

While the posse was hunting Willard, a preliminary hearing of charges against the other Vigilante members was started before Justice of Peace A. J. Adams in Manatee, early in January, 1885. Evidence against the men was flimsy and for a time it appeared as though all would be released.

However, drastic methods were used to secure action. A group of men, egged on by the cattlemen and land agents, massed outside the room where the hearing was being held. A spokesman for the group, George Riggin, called aside one of the accused, Dr. A. W. Hunter, and grimly declared that unless Hunter told everything he knew, there would be some "hemp stretching." Afraid of the mob, Dr. Hunter talked.

On the strength of his evidence, twenty Vigilantes were bound over to the grand jury which met at Pine Level in March, 1885. Many witnesses were called and the secret sessions lasted more than a week. Four men were indicted for murder—Edmond P. Bacon, Louis L. Cato, Thomas Dryman and Adam W. Hunter. Five others were indicted as accessories before the fact—Dr. Leonard F. Andrews, Jason L. Alford, Charles B. Willard, Joseph C. Anderson and Alfred B. Bidwell.

The trial started May 18, 1885, in the court room of Judge Henry Lawrence Mitchell in the small county court house at Pine Level. Because of the many unusual and dramatic angles of the case, newspaper correspondents flocked to the little county seat from as far away as New York and Chicago.

To these writers, Pine Level was truly a primitive outpost. Its remoteness from civilization was emphasized by the fact that they had to travel the last thirty miles of their journey on horseback. Their dispatches were carried by couriers to the nearest telegraph offices at Tampa and Bartow. They wrote columns and columns about the trial and the story was featured on the front pages of nearly every newspaper in the country.

The Abbe murder case came up first, with Willard, Anderson and Bacon as defendants. After a bitter court battle which lasted nearly three weeks, Willard and Anderson were convicted of murder in the first degree but the jury recommended mercy. Bacon was acquitted.

Newspapermen who covered the trial, and two others which followed in July and August, muffed the real story. They did not know, for instance, that while the trials were in progress, a score of Manatee men, inflamed with hatred, were camping nearby, with guns hidden, determined to see that "justice was done"—if not by the jury, then by lynching.

These Manatee "justice seekers" were venomous simply because they had been told, over and over, that the Sara Sotans were the scum of the earth. One of them wrote to his parents: "They (the Sara Sotans) are negro killers and rascals, yes, devils! I mean it. . . . Unless they are exterminated, they will exterminate us. . . . We keep our shooting irons in the tent, out of sight, and the prisoners are disappointed because there is no sign of any excitement. . . . They are looking for grounds to ask for a change of venue . . . but we shall see that they are tried here."

During the second trial, witnesses testified that the three men who had shot Riley were Dryman, Bacon and Cato and that Cato slashed Riley's throat. Witnesses also stated that the leaders who gave the orders were Alford, Dr. Andrews and Bidwell. In this trial, the jury returned a verdict of murder in the first degree against Dr. Andrews, Bidwell and Bacon. They were sentenced to be hanged. Dr. Hunter was acquitted.

At a subsequent trial held in August, also in connection with the Riley murder, Cato, Dryman, Anderson and Willard likewise were found guilty of first degree murder. But the jury recommended mercy and they were sentenced to life imprisonment. All other members of the Vigilantes, who had been held in jail as material witnesses, were released. Charges against them were dropped, some because they had become state's witnesses and others because evidence against them was too flimsy to secure convictions.

In all three trials, testimony was introduced to prove that the Vigilantes had perfected plans to kill Abbe while a big house warming party was being held in Bidwell's new home on Christmas day, 1884. While the ladies chatted inside the house, the Vigilantes slipped away one by one, congregated in Bidwell's old home nearby, and there decreed that Abbe must die. He was shot by Willard, it was stated, and his body was then thrown on a little raft, towed ten miles out in the Gulf by Bacon's sloop *Edith*, and thrown overboard.

### *Why Were the Murders Committed?*

More than six decades have passed since the murder of Abbe. During that long period, many theories have been advanced for the Vigilantes' cold-blooded slayings.

One suggested motive which gained wide acceptance was that the men were killed because of a feud between the Yankee and "cracker" settlers. This is ridiculous. It cannot be supported by facts in any way. At no time in the Sara Sota community was there dissension between settlers who came from the north and those who were from the "cracker region" of Georgia and Florida.

In the Vigilante organization there were as many northerners as southerners. The main leader, Alford, was from Georgia. His two chief lieutenants, Bidwell and Dr. Andrews, were from the north, Bidwell having come here from Buffalo and Andrews from Iowa. As for the victims of the Vigilantes, Abbe was from Illinois and Riley from Georgia.

Another theory is that the murders were the result of a feud between the riffraff and the "good people" in Sara Sota. Tommyrot! The Vigilantes organization was a strange conglomeration of both groups. It contained vicious, no-good scoundrels like Cato, to be sure, but it also contained men of excellent reputation.

Such a man was Bidwell. He was well-to-do for those days and came here because of ill health early in 1877, directly from Buffalo. He bought two tracts of land from the state, the first on April 19, 1877, and the second on January 23, 1878. On one of the tracts he built one of the best homes in the Land of Sarasota—it is still standing and for many years has been the home of Miss Ethel Wood. Bidwell started a model farm, getting seeds and plants from the state's leading horticulturists.

During his trial, a number of the leading citizens of Buffalo testified by depositions that he was a man of fine character. Included among those who rallied to his defense were a judge of the supreme court of New York state, the clerk of the same court, a judge of the superior court of Buffalo, and the comptroller of the City of Buffalo. All said they had known Bid-

well for years and that he was a peaceful, honorable and law-abiding citizen.

And yet—one of the men who camped at Pine Level to see that “justice” was done, wrote to his parents: “This man Bidwell is a fiend! He has killed seven white men and God only knows how many niggers!” Where and when? This “justice seeker” did not say—he undoubtedly never even knew that Bidwell had been villified by persons who wanted Bidwell out of the way—because he owned key tracts of outlet land!

Dr. Andrews, a physician, also had a good reputation at his former home, Cass County, Iowa. Six citizens of the county declared his character was above reproach. He came here in 1881 for his health and was respected by all his neighbors. He bought two tracts of land and planted orange groves. He had a good medical practice.

Alford also was the owner of two tracts of land he purchased from the state, the first in 1877 and the second in 1882, and he was generally considered as one of Sarasota's leading citizens.

What about the victims of the Vigilantes? Which were they: riffraff or “good people”?

Abbe was a well-educated man, with a fine family, and owned more property than any one in the entire community, more than a thousand acres. Among the leading families of Manatee, he had many friends. His word carried weight in Tallahassee and even in Washington.

On the other hand, Riley was a man who owned no property and never was known to work his fingers to the bone.

During the trials it was said Riley had been killed because he was living with a widow without benefit of clergy and that he “intended” to steal her property. Abbe was killed, it was said, because he put poison in watermelons growing in Dr. Andrews' garden and that children had eaten the melons and become sick. Hence, the Vigilantes decided to kill Riley and the postmaster! What rubbish! It is inconceivable that twenty men would gang together and cold-bloodedly plan to murder two men for such reasons. Horsewhipping them or riding them out of the county on a rail, perhaps; but murder, no! It simply just doesn't make sense.

Then, just what motive could incite twenty men to conspire to commit such murders? Viewed against the background of history and associated events, the motive stands out plain and clear. The Vigilantes killed the men because they thought, rightly or wrongly, that Riley and Abbe were working in the interests of the land grabbers.

Some miles from Sarasota lives a woman, now nearly 80, whose uncle was a Vigilante—one who was never apprehended or suspected. She tells the story this way:

"So far as I know, the real reason for the murders has never been given. Here it is. The Vigilantes organized to prevent the community from being gobbled up by the speculators.

"Land agents began coming around to the pioneers' homes telling them to get out. These agents had exact descriptions of their properties—knew exactly where their boundary lines were. How did they get that information? No surveyors had been around nor any strangers. Someone in Sara Sota must be giving it—but just who was that somebody?

"The Vigilantes began keeping a close watch on all their neighbors. One day a man living below Phillippi Creek said his wife had seen Riley pacing off their land a month or so before—and that two weeks later a land agent came around with a description of their land. Was Riley the man who gave that information? The Vigilantes detailed a squad to watch his every move. They trailed him for days and watched him taking measurements of properties. They also saw him go regularly to the post-office and mail letters. Suspicion of his guilt turned into certainty and the Vigilantes voted that he must die. So he was killed.

"But after Riley was killed, the land agents kept coming around, with more threats of legal action—and with more property descriptions. Somebody else also was an informer. This time the finger of suspicion pointed directly at Abbe. Like Riley he had measured up properties but for a long time the settlers believed he was doing it to help them prove up their homestead claims and that he was acting as an agent of the government. But then the Vigilantes learned that Abbe was having dealings with one of the worst of the land grabbers. They also learned that measuring homesteads wasn't part of a postmaster's job. They checked carefully and finally became convinced he was the real informer—the man they thought was betraying them. So he too was killed.

"Alford was drawn into the mess because he hated the big cattlemen so bitterly and because he sympathized with the squatters. Sympathy also got Doc Andrews and Bidwell involved—both heard so many of the squatters' stories of high-handed actions of the land grabbers that their sense of justice was outraged. They knew the squatters would have no chance of fighting the big land companies in court so they used the frontiersman's way of getting justice—and helped to organize the Vigilantes. But they did not want to have Riley or Abbe killed — they just wanted to get them out of this section. But the ruffraff in the Vigilantes finally got control, and committed the murders. Then, to save their own necks, the 'no-accounts' lied at the trials and threw all the blame on the Vigilante leaders. As a result, many of the worst offenders went scot free. Some weren't even tried.

"There is a very good reason why the real motives for the murders

were not brought out in court. Two of the defendants' lawyers were strong supporters of Governor Bloxham and they insisted that nothing should 'go into the record' about the land deals and the activities of the land grabbers' agents. So the real motive for the killings never came out."

No one knows and no one perhaps ever will know for sure whether Riley and Abbe were acting as informers. Perhaps the suspicion of the Vigilantes were entirely unfounded. Both men are dead and cannot tell their stories.

Never in the history of Florida were there two more cold-blooded murders than those committed by the Vigilantes. But it is interesting to note that not one of the convicted men suffered the full penalty for his crime.

Dr. Andrews and Bacon escaped from the Pine Level jail while "closely guarded." Old timers say they were aided in their get-away by the Sara Sota group and were taken to Punta Gorda where a boat was waiting to carry them to safety. Neither man was ever recaptured.

Bidwell too could have escaped but he refused, saying he would rather die than live in hiding the remainder of his life. While awaiting the death penalty in the state penitentiary his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. Several years later he was released. So were all the other convicted men. Alford was later caught in Georgia and returned to Manatee County. A petition urging that he be released was signed by 502 of the 560 registered voters then in the county. A perfunctory trial was held and he was pronounced innocent! The "stooges" of the land-grabbers no longer could intimidate the jurors.

There were a number of interesting sequels to the Vigilantes episode.

Old timers say that agents for the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co., Ltd., the British concern which founded Sarasota, wanted to locate the town in the old Sara Sota section, between Hudson Bayou and Phillippi Creek but when settlers there joined the Vigilantes, and started murdering, the land agents, not caring to be killed themselves, sought another location for the town site. And the one they chose is where downtown Sarasota is today.

The old timers also say that Vigilante sympathizers helped Mrs. Carrie S. Abbe remain as postmistress of Sarasota for 31 years. It is said she was an open enemy of her husband's cousin, Postmaster Charles R. Abbe, because he had sold her worthless land. The Vigilantes knew how she had been wronged and in later years, when they had political influence, they helped keep her in office.

In 1889, when an election was held to select a new site for the Manatee County courthouse, practically everyone in the Sara Sota community turned thumbs down on the town of Manatee and voted instead for Brad-

enton, then just an upstart village. Perhaps it was in this manner that the Sara Sotans got their real revenge for Manatee's part in organizing the posse which rounded up the Vigilantes. Today, the town of Manatee no longer exists — it has been absorbed by Bradenton.

### *Effects of the Land Grants*

The granting by the state of nearly 700,000 acres of Manatee County land to the land speculators had a profound effect upon the development of this entire region, particularly in the present Sarasota County where at least 90 per cent of the land was deeded away for little or nothing.

In effect, these grants completely nullified the Homestead Act, so far as the Land of Sarasota was concerned. It halted abruptly the influx of colonizers during the decades when all America was frontier-minded. After the grants were made, the only land left here for homesteaders was on the keys, none of which are exactly suitable for farms or groves, much as they may be desired for winter homes.

If the land grants had not been made, the back country here undoubtedly would be far more developed than it is today. There are many sections of the county where pioneers would have gone, if they could have gotten land by homesteading. As it is, a person can travel mile after mile even in sections where the land is good without seeing a house.

So far as can be learned, this region did not benefit directly in any way by the profligate disposition of its land. Not a mile of railroad track was built in this section by the companies which got the land "to develop the country". No drainage canal was dug or other improvements made.

Manatee County didn't even benefit materially through an increase in the amount of property on the tax rolls. In 1888, the companies which had received the 697,846 acres were assessed less than \$3600 in taxes—about one-half cent an acre. And many of the companies didn't even pay promptly these microscopic taxes; they were delinquent year after year. This despite the fact that many of the companies had used the land to float big bond issues which were sold to gullible northerners—and the land grabbers pocketed the money and let the land lay idle.

Fortunately, however, the land grants did not prove to be a complete disaster to the Land of Sarasota. They ultimately resulted in the founding of the town of Sarasota by the Florida Mortgage and Investment Co., which acquired some 50,000 acres during the land deals.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE SCOTS COME — AND GO!

TIMES WERE BAD in Scotland during the Eighteen-eighties. Great Britain was expanding its empire and waging war in widely separated parts of the world, against peoples who strangely enough resisted the white man's "march of progress"—and all the attendant "blessings" of British rule.

The common people of Scotland did not want those wars of aggression, no more than did the people of England. But the powers-that-were decreed the empire must expand—so expand it did. And the common people were called upon to do the fighting and dying, and to pay staggering taxes to support the armies and the magnificent British navy which ruled the waves.

Scotland was hit particularly hard. By 1885, the country was in the throes of a severe depression. Many enterprises, large and small, closed their doors. Thousands of persons were unemployed. Suffering among the poor was intense. Scores of middle class families still possessing a little money began making plans to emigrate, some to South Africa where the gold and diamond mines were booming, some to Australia and New Zealand, and many to the United States.

One day in August, 1885, in Paisley, Scotland, John B. Browning noticed an article in an Edinburgh newspaper about Florida in general and, in particular, about the "wonderful new town of Sarasota, on Sarasota Bay, in the richest and most beautiful section of the entire state of Florida."

Browning's interest was attracted. He read on and on. In Sarasota, the article related, a man does not have to work hard for a living. . . . He can plant an orange grove at little expense and in a few years the trees will be bearing, and the fruit can be sold at a handsome price. . . . The ground is so fertile and the climate so warm in Sarasota that two bountiful crops of vegetables can be grown each year. . . . The town is small but very modern. . . . The people there truly live an idyllic existence.

So said the article. It was long but Browning read every word of it. He re-read it again and again. He was fascinated.

"Sarasota—ah, that truly is a bonny name!" he murmured. "What a glorious place 'twould be for a mon to live! Warm sunshine all the year. Rich land. Plenty of fish and game! Palm trees and oranges. Ah, that Sarasota must be a wee bit of heaven!"

Browning pondered. In his mind's eye he could see the sun-kissed Land of Sarasota—a land which offered golden opportunities to those with courage enough to break home ties and venture forth across the ocean.

Then the idea struck him—why not join the emigrants and go likewise to beautiful Sarasota? What was holding him back?

Newspaper in hand, Browning left his lumber mill and hurried down Marchalls Lane to the home of his brother-in-law, John Lawrie. He read the article aloud. Then Lawrie read it himself. He too became enthused. But he was a bit skeptical. "How can we know," he asked, "whether all this is true?"

"Why, don't you see, mon, who wrote that article!" exclaimed Browning, pointing to the writer's name. "Can't you see 'twas written by Selven Tate! Don't you know Selven Tate's the nephew of the archbishop of Canterbury! Surely, such a mon would tell no lies!"

That night, Browning and Lawrie told about Sarasota to the members of their families who listened with mouths agape and eyes bright with growing excitement and enthusiasm. They agreed that Sarasota truly must be a fine place to live—and all wanted to go there, as soon as possible.

To learn more about Sarasota, Browning wrote to the Edinburgh office of the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co., Ltd., the company lauded in the article for having opened the Land of Sarasota to colonizers.

In less than a week, a pamphlet was received in the mail—a pamphlet written by a master publicist with infinite imagination. After describing Sarasota in most extravagant terms, the pamphlet stated that an "estate" of forty acres in that marvelous land, and a town lot besides, could be purchased for only one hundred pounds sterling. In just a few years, 'twas said, those Sarasota "estates" would be worth fortunes!

Names which commanded attention were given in the pamphlet as proof of the soundness of the colonization undertaking. The president of the company was none other than Sir John Gillespie, respected owner of a large estate near Edinburgh. Two of the directors were the archbishop of Canterbury, noted throughout the British empire, and the lord dean of guild of Edinburgh. Men of the highest standing, all!

Doubts dissipated, the Brownings and Lawries immediately began making arrangements to go to Sarasota. They sold their properties in Paisley and each paid a hundred pounds for his forty-acre estate and town lot. They packed their belongings and went by train to Glasgow. There they met fifty-one other colonists-to-be; men, women and children from Scotland and England who had been lured by the glowing pamphlets of the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co. The group was called the Ormiston Colony, after the home of Sir John Gillespie.

The colonists sailed from Glasgow on the steamship "Furnesia" November 25, 1885, and arrived in New York after a stormy trip on December 10. After passing through the customs office, they were met by Selven Tate, who turned out to be one of the promoters of the colonization scheme, and taken to a hotel. In New York, the colonists spent three days, marveling at the sights of the big city. They then left on the steamship "State of Texas" for Fernandina where they arrived early December 17.

The trip across the state was made in a "special train" of the narrow-gauge railroad known as the "two streaks of rust" which ended at Cedar Keys. Hours passed before the colonists reached Gainesville, where they stayed overnight. They arrived in Cedar Keys late in the afternoon of December 18.

At Cedar Keys, the colonists began to have their first misgivings about the wisdom of their venture. Tate informed them they would have to wait at least several weeks until lumber could be taken to Sarasota and portable homes erected. This was disquieting news indeed. They had been led to believe housing accommodations would be available for them in the town of their dreams as soon as they could get there. But now they were told they would have to wait.

Some of the colonists began to worry. However, the more optimistic insisted everything would turn out fine and Tate left "to make final arrangements, and to hurry things up," he said. The Scotch then spent their time talking to the fishermen at the docks in Cedar Keys, watching the ox teams plodding through the heavy white sand, going through the plant of the Eagle Pencil Co. where cedar pencils and penholders were made, and becoming accustomed to life in the sub-tropics, where everything was new and strange.

Christmas came and went. Then the colonists became so impatient they could wait no longer. They chartered the side-wheel steamer, "Gov. Safford," and started off on the last leg of their journey December 27. The little steamer, less than a hundred feet long, was badly overcrowded. The women and children spent the night huddled in the tiny cabin; the men slept on top of luggage or in the engine room.

Early next morning, when everyone was chilly and more than a little worried about what was in store for them, Mrs. Lawrie opened a hundred-pound chest of tea she had brought along with her, asked the captain for boiling water, and with some of the other ladies served tea—as much as anyone wanted. It helped to cheer the colonists.

Early Monday afternoon, December 28, 1885, the "Gov. Safford" slowly crept through Sarasota Pass, the captain keeping an anxious eye for sandbars on which his ship might be grounded. He had never gone into Sarasota Bay before and could only guess at the depth of the water. But

finally the pass was cleared and the steamer proceeded to an anchorage about a hundred yards from shore. It was the first steamer to complete a voyage to Sarasota.

While waiting for boats to take them to land, the colonists crowded along the rails. They peered anxiously up and down the coast, trying to locate the town of Sarasota—the new, model town—which they had read about in Scotland. But not a sign of a town could they see, anywhere!

Questions were on everyone's lips. Have we come to the right place? Where are we going to stay? Have we been cheated into buying farms in a wilderness?

No one was there to tell them that the "town" of Sarasota existed only on a map, drawn in Scotland by promoters of the colonization scheme, the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co., Ltd.

No one told them that the broad streets and avenues, which stood out so prettily on the town plat, had not even been cleared of trees, much less grubbed and graded.

No one told them that the only buildings in the so-called town were the company store, established in an abandoned fish oil plant at the waterfront; a shack up in the woods where the fish oil plant employes had lived, and the Willard home, a little down the bay.

But before many hours passed, the colonists learned all this—and much, much more.

Taken ashore in boats, the colonists congregated at the company store. They demanded the truth from A. C. Acton, whom they learned was the local representative of the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co. Reluctantly, hesitantly, Acton told them they had come "earlier than had been expected" and that no houses for them had been provided. He admitted the "town" had not yet passed beyond the blue-print stage.

But again and again, Acton insisted everything would turn out well. He declared that Sarasota would quickly become the finest city in all of Florida. "Why, there are millions of dollars behind this undertaking!" he asserted. "The officials of the company are determined to make it a success! You just wait and see!"

Partly reassured, the colonists went outside the store and saw men, women and children coming along the sandy trails—"natives" who had heard the steamer's whistle and had come from miles around to see "them Scotch" they had been told were coming. Among these "natives" were the Whitakers, the Abbes, the Crockers, the Tatums, the Tuckers, and many others, families which knew every foot of the Land of Sarasota.

With the "natives" helping, the trunks and boxes containing the colonists' belongings were carried from the "Gov. Safford" on a raft which had been built by T. M. Weir, in charge of the company store.

When everything was brought ashore, the steamer lifted anchor and slowly proceeded down the bay, through the pass, and disappeared behind the keys.

The colonists then proceeded to make the best of their predicament. Some of them went to live in the homes of settlers, trudging through the sand or sitting in lurching ox-carts. The Lawries and the Brereton family found shelter in the old cedar bucket plant, down the bay at the foot of Cunliff Lane. Two other families moved into the Willard house, then abandoned.

The Lawries had brought with them a large tent. They turned it over to the Brownings who pitched it under the pines near the company store. The beds were made on the bare ground. Soon Mrs. Browning was busy at a camp fire, making Scotch scones and pancakes with plenty of tea. That night, some of the Browning children slept in the company store. While the children slept, the older members of the family gathered around a big bonfire and talked with old settlers. And it's recorded that some of the young "natives" did their best to make a good impression on the pretty, red-cheeked Scottish girls.

The next morning, Hamlin Whitaker proved to be a good Samaritan by helping the Brownings solve their food problem—the only thing the company store had had for sale was a barrel of crackers which was emptied by the colonists' children soon after their arrival. So there was nothing left in the store to eat. But Whitaker made sure the Brownings wouldn't go hungry. He went out with his cast net and in a short time came back with a load of mullet. Then he helped clean and fry them. They were just ready to eat when Emile Whitaker came along with some bread his mother had baked for the strangers from a strange land. Later, the Whitaker boys showed the Browning girls how to make bread in a deep pan over a camp fire.

New Year's day, always a big holiday for the Scotch, was celebrated in a grand manner by the colonists who gathered at the cedar bucket plant. Mrs. Lawrie and Mrs. Brereton unpacked their linen table cloths, china and silver and set the table—rough planks on tressels. Tom Burges brought a large plum pudding his sister had made for him before he left Scotland. The pudding was cut into thin slices so each person could have a piece—and be reminded of home! The portions of plum pudding were tiny but there was plenty other food. The settlers had brought in game and fish, and plates were heaped high. And it's even said that the colonists had more than one "wee nip" of Cuban rum and Sarasota's "dynamite" before the day was over.

That New Year's day celebration was the last happy gathering of the colonists. From then on, they had little cause to rejoice about anything.

The Scotch became more and more dissatisfied and unhappy. They had reason to be disgruntled. Sarasota had been grossly misrepresented to them.

Miss Nellie Lawrie, a member of the colony, told in her memoirs of the discontent. She said that while church services were being held one Sunday outside a tent, a passage from Isaiah was read by Tate, the nephew of the archbishop of Canterbury. Related Miss Lawrie: "When he came to the verse which reads: 'All we like sheep have gone astray', there was an audible groan from the audience."

One of the chief grievances of the colonists was the manner by which the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co. allotted the forty-acre "estates." This was done in a "drawing" during which each colonist reached in a box and drew out a slip of paper on which a farm number was given. The number designated the land the colonist would have to take, regardless of its location.

The late Alex Browning, son of John Browning, told of the drawing: "One would naturally think the company would have selected close-in acreage, when it had so much land, and try to please the colonists. But in many cases the colonists drew plots which were six or eight miles out in the woods, common pine land, good only for cattle range. It took some time for everybody to learn just where their plots were.

"The forty acres my father drew were located near the site of the present Fruitville church and cemetery. This seems a short distance now but in those days it was a long, long way from Sarasota.

"Some of the colonists started in at once to clear their land, grubbing and cutting down pine trees, digging wells and building shacks. But the work they did was painful and discouraging to men unaccustomed to the use of grub hoes, axes or shovels. They all began to realize Sarasota was not the paradise the pamphlets had pictured.

"A few of the hotheads decided to call on Tate with a shot gun but he evidently got wind of it and disappeared. He never returned.

"One of the most discouraging events, which occurred shortly after we arrived, was a change in the weather. About January 9 it became much colder and snow began to fall, greatly to the surprise of the natives who thought at first the woods were afire and that the ashes were being carried by the wind. It snowed quite a bit, enough to make snowballs. All work ceased and the men huddled around stumps being burned out of the road which was to be Main Street. Even the mules and oxen were too cold to work. Of course we all suffered, living in tents and shacks and cooking over camp fires.

"Many of the colonists were so discouraged by the bad weather and the remote farm plots they had gotten, that they decided to leave Sarasota.

The Lawries were the first to go. Then the Breretons, and Galloways, and Watson's. Others followed."

An inkling of the thoughts of the discouraged Scotsmen is given in a diary left by Dan McKinlay. Here are just a few of his entries: "Tuesday, Dec. 29: We are occupying a little log hut. It's queer experience; I can't describe it. I am going to light my pipe for I am very sad." Dec. 31: "Weather very cold—not at all like sunny Florida." Jan. 11: "The night was awfully cold. We could not keep out the cold." Jan. 21: "Tramping through the thick undergrowth, my thoughts rigidly fixed on the formidable rattlesnake." Jan. 25: "The talk is all about leaving." Jan. 26: "The colony is breaking up very fast." Feb. 1: "No church here . . . weary to get to one." Feb. 3: "Prairie on fire all around us . . . everything is burning." Feb. 4: "Prospects here are so bad . . . in fact, it means starvation if we stay." Feb. 7: "Growing more and more of opinion that we can't make a living here. . . . The colony seems to have completely broken up." Feb. 15: "Start today for Tampa." Feb. 18: "Not over well pleased with Tampa—any place is better than desolate Sarasota."

So went the Scotch colonists. The men, women and children who had left Scotland with such high hopes less than three months before. Now their hopes were blasted. Many were left almost penniless and had to borrow money to go to northern states where they had friends or relatives. All lost the hundred pounds they had invested, to say nothing of the money spent for the long trip from Scotland.

### *Why Did the Scotch Colony Fail?*

The colony was a complete, colossal failure. But it is difficult to fix the responsibility for the debacle. Certainly, Sir John Gillespie and the directors of the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co., Ltd., all men of honor and integrity, did not deliberately conspire to rob their fellow countrymen. Then just what was the cause of the collapse of the colonization venture?

In attempting to answer that question we must backtrack a few years and retrace our steps to the Disston purchase of four million acres of Florida land for 25 cents an acre.

As stated before, Disston's company, the Florida Land & Improvement Co., got title to 246,052 acres in this locality June 12, 1883. It was all back country land—none of it fronted on Sarasota Bay.

Disston and his associates were not interested in selling this huge tract to individuals in small parcels. In order to get their money back, and make a profit, they wanted to sell large blocks to other speculators. To do that, the Disston concern officials realized they would have to acquire title to waterfront land—good waterfront land. So one of the company's

directors, John J. Dunne, was sent here to buy the properties needed for a good "outlet."

Dunne was a shrewd land agent. Operating quietly and without letting his connection with Disston become known, he bought from A. E. Willard a tract of 93.78 acres which now is the heart of Sarasota. For this tract, he paid \$1,500. This tract extended from Mound to Seventh streets, and from the bay back to Central Avenue. It was a perfect "outlet" property for the immense Disston holdings. Now everything was set for a really worthwhile transaction.

At that time, in 1884 and 1885, Scotch and English financiers had plenty of money to invest in speculative schemes, despite the depression in the British Isles. One of the places they had their eye on was Florida. So when agents for the Disston company appeared with glowing descriptions of the Land of Sarasota, they found eager listeners.

Unfortunately, the names of the super-salesmen who swung the Sarasota deal have never been disclosed. However, there is reason to believe that two retired British naval officers, Piers E. Warburton and Robert W. Hanbury, were go-betweens. That's indicated, but not proved, by old land abstracts on which their names appear.

However, regardless of who the salesmen were, they succeeded in convincing Sir John Gillespie and a group of his friends that the Sarasota region was a place which heaven had truly blessed—and where shrewd investors could make money. So Sir John and his buddies formed the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co., Ltd., and purchased 49,431 acres from Disston's company, paying \$1 an acre.

The British concern also bought the land formerly owned by Willard. For this key tract, which Willard sold to Dunne for \$1,500, the Britishers paid \$7,000. They also paid a stiff price for a block held jointly by the Disston company; Dunne, the Disston agent, and the two British naval officers, Hanbury and Warburton. For this tract, containing 1,560 acres, \$50,424.07 was paid! Three years before Disston had paid just \$390 for the same tract! Not a bad profit!

During 1885, the British outfit also purchased a number of other tracts, including 120 acres from Mrs. Charlotte R. Abbe, widow of the postmaster murdered by the Vigilantes. It is estimated by real estate men that the concern paid, altogether, approximately \$110,000 for its Sarasota holdings. The exact amount cannot be ascertained simply because some of the transactions were never recorded, strange as that may seem.

For instance, the concern in 1891 got 190 acres, including all the land between Seventh and Twelfth streets, after paying \$7.32 in delinquent taxes owed by "parties unknown"! Such things simply don't happen by accident. One hundred and ninety acres of good land for \$7.32! It doesn't

make sense. The only possible explanation is that the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co. had some other claim to the land—a claim which was never recorded.

Sir John never came to Sarasota to look over his domain. Neither did any of the directors of his company. There is every reason to think they swallowed the glib talk of the land salesmen and conscientiously believed Sarasota was truly a paradise on earth. Had that not been the case, they certainly never would have let their names be used in the pamphlet which eulogized the colonization scheme so fulsomely. Sir John and his associates proved their good intentions later—but that's getting ahead of the story.

The colonization venture could just as easily have been a success as it was a wash-out. If it had been properly planned, if suitable houses had been provided for the colonizers, if a church had been built, if the company had used common sense in parceling out the land—then the story of the colony might have had a happy ending.

But there was one other thing which tended to foredoom the venture. The colonists who came here were unfitted in every way for pioneering in a frontier country. They were families of the upper middle class—fine families all. But not one had ever been a farmer. Not one knew anything about Florida soil—not one could even tell the difference between hardpan land and fertile hammocks. As pioneers in a strange land, they were complete misfits.

To make matters doubly bad, Mother Nature played them a dirty trick and gave Florida one of the worst cold spells in the history of the state soon after the colony arrived. Living in shacks and tents, the colonists nearly froze. No wonder they began to leave.

By May 1, 1886, the colony had ceased to be. Only the Browning family and a few others remained. And so ended one of the most unfortunate episodes in the history of the Land of Sarasota.

## CHAPTER 7

### THE VILLAGE OF SARASOTA IS BORN

THE SCOTCH colony collapsed, but even while its doom was being sealed by the departure of most of the colonists, the village of Sarasota came into existence. And, for a time, the village thrived. In fact, it boomed!

The boom was "made in Scotland" by officials of the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co., Ltd. Sir John Gillespie and his associates considered the colony only one phase of the development program they had mapped out for their vast domain of 50,000 acres in the Land of Sarasota. They had other plans, big plans, in mind.

Men of imagination, they could see a large city springing up on the shore of Sarasota Bay. They could see a rich back country, thickly settled with prospering farmers growing produce for the markets of the world.

Those Britishers were a couple of generations ahead of their times, perhaps, but they had the courage of their convictions. And, what was more important, they had the money needed to change Sarasota from a dream town existing only on a plat into at least a partial actuality.

From Edinburgh, Scotland, they sent orders— weeks before the colonists landed here—to their local manager, A. C. Acton, to erect portable houses in which the colonists could stay until they moved into their permanent homes. Acton also got orders to build a large rooming house for people of moderate means and a "fine hotel" where people of wealth and influence could be properly accommodated. In addition, Acton was instructed to build a wharf, where ships could dock, and to open up the streets and avenues shown on the town plat which had been drafted in Scotland.

Acton did the best he could to carry out these orders. But he was a sick man, ill from an incurable disease. He lacked the energy needed to push through the development program. That explains, no doubt, the lack of housing accommodations for the Scotch colonists upon their arrival. It may even partially explain the collapse of the colonization venture.

Despite Acton's illness, he managed finally to get the development program started. So to him goes the credit of being Sarasota's first builder. Under his direction, Sarasota's first wharf was built and the large rooming house on the northeast corner of Main and Central later known as the Sarasota House.

Acton also gets the credit for directing work on the first public improvements—opening up Main Street and drilling the first artesian well.

Construction of the dock and rooming house was started early in January, 1886. A number of colonists were employed to do the work, all who were able or willing to tackle such jobs. A few carpenters from Manatee also were hired.

The needed lumber was brought here in schooners from Cedar Keys, Pensacola and Appalachicola. The boats were anchored as close to shore as possible and then the lumber was thrown overboard. While it floated in the water, it was picked up by the workmen and loaded onto wagons which had been pulled out into the bay by mules.

Alex Browning, who helped on the job, said in his memoirs it was the worst task he ever had. "The water was mighty cold and we all became badly chilled," he wrote, "but we stuck to the work until it was finished."

Lacking machinery of any kind, the workmen found the construction of the pier at the foot of Main Street a formidable undertaking. To set the heavy pine piles, they had to rock each one back and forth, hour after hour, until it finally worked its way through the sand, a quarter inch at a time, down to solid rock. At the end of the pier the men had to work in water shoulder deep. Backbreaking, fatiguing work—but it was done!

After the piles were set, they were braced and cross-braced, sills and joists were laid and a deck of heavy lumber built. At the end of the pier, a 50-foot-square extension was added and on this a warehouse was erected to house merchandise brought by boat for the company store. More than three months were required to finish the pier but, when completed it was a "fine job," as Browning proudly remarked.

When the wharf was finished, the side-wheel steamer *Erie* began making regular trips between Sarasota and Tampa, coming into the bay through Sarasota Pass. The embryo village strutted with pride. Now it was really on the map. Later, the *Erie* was succeeded by the *Mary Disston*, known locally as the *Dirty Mary*. This was a larger boat and carried both freight and passengers.

While the boom was on, Sarasota was a port of call for many schooners. Some of the best known were the *Sea Turtle*, owned by Capt. Frank Blackburn; *Nemo*, by Capt. Harry F. Higel; *Rambler*, by Capt. Frank Strobar; *Alligator*, by Capt. Edward Ferguson; *Emma*, by Hamlin Whitaker; *Secundus*, by Capt. T. G. Edmondson; *Ruby*, by Capt. Furman C. Whitaker; *Rosa*, by Capt. Arthur Jones, and *Wild Goose*, by Capt. Ernest Kretchmeyer.

Many pleasure yachts also anchored here, the best known being the *Ella M. Little*, later known as the *Phantom*, owned for many years by Capt. V. A. Saunders and later by Capt. William Hamlin.

Before the Sarasota House was finished, seven portable houses, brought here on the schooner *Lone Star*, were erected by John R. Scott three blocks north of the "business district." These were intended for use by the colonists but by the time they were erected, most of the colonists had left. They were later occupied by negroes.

The first two real houses were built on Seventh Street by Richard Scott, brother of John. They stood for many years.

Photo  
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The famous old Sarasota House, built in 1886, as it looked just before it was razed in 1924 to make way for the building now known as the Palmer National Bank building and for Lord's Arcade, both constructed by J. H. Lord.

The first house built from an architect's drawing was erected for Acton, the company manager, at Link and Morrill streets. Part of it is still standing. The plans were drawn by Alex Browning who was commissioned to do the work when Acton learned that 19-year-old Browning had served as an apprentice to a noted architect in Glasgow before coming to Sarasota. This house was erected in the spring of 1886.

John Browning, father of Alex, was a skilled carpenter. He worked on most of the best buildings of the infant village and in his spare time built a home for his family on Main Street a little east of Pineapple.

During 1886, Main Street began to look something like a village "business district." Dr. Thomas Wallace, who came with the colonists, erected a one-and-a-half story house on the north side of the street about a hundred feet from Palm Avenue. In one of the rooms he had a cot where patients

could be treated. He also put in a small stock of drugs, thereby establishing the first drug store of Sarasota.

The first general store in the village, aside from the company store, was opened in March, 1886, by Furman and Will Whitaker in a building they erected on the south side of Main, almost directly opposite Dr. Wallace's establishment. 'Tis said they sold everything from plug tobacco to gunpowder.

The first meat market was opened in April, 1886, by Hamlin Whitaker in a little frame building on the northwest corner of Main and Palm. He butchered a steer once a week. Ice was unobtainable then, here in Sarasota, and meat kept fresh only a day or so. Consequently, Whitaker would send half the steer to Manatee and sell the remainder to Sarasotans.

In the fall of 1886, the first livery stable in the village was built on the present site of the Sarasota Hotel by Hamlin Whitaker—that man seems to have been into everything! He bought three bright and shiny fringe topped surreys and had a half dozen good horses. From then, on, Sarasota's young men had the means to take their ladies fair on "sight-seeing" trips along the sandy trails. The buggies were in big demand!

The first village blacksmith, cobbler, wagon-builder, and general handyman was Jack Tatum, a light-haired, freckled-faced man who moved into "town" in 1886 from Tatum Ridge with his wife and daughter Lillie.

"There was nothing Jack wouldn't tackle," declared Alex Browning, in his memoirs. "He would shoe the most stubborn mule, re-make any part of a wagon, mend saddle or harness, or fix a sewing machine. His lighter professional ability was sometimes taxed when called upon to pull someone's aching tooth, or repair a clock. It is said that when he finished putting one clock back together again, he had one wheel left over, but the clock ran and kept good time just the same.

"Sometimes the gang would run out of liquor. The men would appeal to Jack and convince him their thirst was terrible. Jack would go down to the blacksmith shop, where there usually was a barrel of sour mash in the corner. He would pour some in a boiler and start the fire going. Pretty soon the steam would commence coming off. A gun barrel, wrapped with clay, was used in place of a coil. Some one would pour water on it while the liquor would drip into a jug. Often the stuff would be drunk while still hot. When enough was run off to satisfy everyone, the boiler would be packed away again. Truly, Jack was a handy man.

"When the occasion required, Jack served as a veterinarian. He also was a musician. He had an organ in his home and when he had visitors, Jack would invariably sit down on the organ stool and pump vigorously with his feet, till the wheezy sound would indicate that its wind was up.

Then, with all his fingers, he'd come down on the keys. If the chords were a little sour, it didn't matter; they sounded good just the same. And when he'd sing: "Is my name written thaar, in the book bright and faar," we all felt his name should be written on the bright side of his celestial account."

The Sarasota House was completed late in March, 1886. It wasn't much for looks but in the eyes of Sarasotans it was the "grandest hotel" south of Tampa. Located on the present site of the Palmer National Bank and Lord's Arcade, it had a large dining room and about twenty bed rooms, and verandas fronting on both Main Street and Central Avenue. The building, well constructed, stood until 1924 when it was torn down to make way for modern structures. Joe Vincent and his wife, Rosie, rented and operated the hotel until 1899 when they purchased it.

### *Gillespie Comes to Sarasota*

One of the first guests in the Sarasota House was a man who later played a most important part in the development of the community—John Hamilton Gillespie, son of Sir John Gillespie, president of the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co. A striking character, this man Gillespie—a book could be written regarding him and no page of it would be dull.

A tall, sturdy man, with reddish-brown hair and piercing eyes, Gillespie was set in his ways when he came to Sarasota. He was extreme in his likes and dislikes. He would do anything for his friends but, when he had the power, he would grind those who had incurred his displeasure. However, for every enemy he had a dozen friends who liked him despite his faults. So probably he was a pretty good fellow after all.

Born in Maffat, Dumfriesshire, Scotland, in 1852, Gillespie led an adventurous life before coming here at the age of 34. Educated at Oxford, he served with the Royal Company of Archers, Queen's bodyguards in Scotland, and went to Australia when still a young man with the Midlothian Artillery Brigade of Volunteers. On his return, he got married and his father sent him here to represent the company's interests shortly after word was received in Scotland that the Scotch colony had collapsed. Mrs. Gillespie came with him.

On his arrival here, Gillespie soon learned that the company's affairs were in a sorry state. He realized that the departure of the colonists was a grievous loss to the community. He also realized that the boom being experienced by the village was an artificial boom, caused only by the influx of construction workers. He knew that when the construction work was finished, the boom would collapse—so he tried to take steps to give the community a firm foundation on which it could grow and prosper.

Gillespie relieved Acton of his duties and retired him on a pension, which was paid until Acton died about six months later.

Work on the village streets had lagged. Even many in the "downtown section" were still covered with trees and undergrowth. Gillespie hired a gang of men and the streets were cleared and grubbed. Ditches were dug and dirt from them was thrown out into the center of the street to form a crown. Such streets weren't anything to brag about but they were better than no streets at all.

While this road work was going on, Gillespie gave orders to speed up the construction of the company's "fine hotel for people of wealth and influence" which had been started at the foot of Main Street, south of the company's store. He went over the plans for the hotel and ordered many changes, declaring he wouldn't be satisfied unless the hotel turned out to be the finest on the entire West Coast.

More carpenters were hired and work on the hotel progressed rapidly. Lumber for it was brought by schooner from Cedar Keys and Appalachicola. The building was three stories high, with an observation tower on top. It contained 30 "spacious" bed rooms and large lobby and dining room. Gillespie named it the De Soto.

On February 2, 1887, Gillespie leased the hotel to Alfred P. Jones and his wife, Annie R., of Cedar Keys. The lease provided that Jones should pay 25 per cent of the net profits for the first year and 40 per cent for the next four years. Mr. and Mrs. Jones had been operating a hotel patronized by wealthy northern fishermen at Thonotassi, Florida, and came here so their guests could fish in the "best fishing grounds in the world."

The De Soto was opened with a grand ball Friday night, February 25, 1887. The celebration was the biggest social event ever held south of Manatee. More than two hundred persons attended and the party lasted until daybreak the next morning. It's reported that many of the men who celebrated didn't sober up until two days later. Truly, it was a gay affair—one that is still remembered vividly by old timers of the Land of Sarasota.

Water for the splendid new De Soto Hotel was obtained from an artesian well drilled on the triangle at Five Points. From the well, a water main was laid down Main Street to the corner of Palm Avenue. At this point, a water ram was placed to force the water to a tank on the roof of the hotel. Later on, the ram leaked and there was always a puddle at the street intersection in which hogs wallowed, much to the disgust of Sarasota's boosters.

While the artesian well was being drilled, Sarasota got a real thrill. Spectators noticed bright, shiny particles of metal in the borings. The report that "gold has been found" spread to all parts of the community and

within a few hours several hundred persons gathered at Five Points. They crowded and pushed to pick up the shiny bits. But their hopes were shattered. It was soon learned that a practical joker had played a trick on them. W. A. "Old Man" Bacon had filed some brass at Jack Tatum's blacksmith shop and had scattered the filings around the well.

Bacon was one of the village's quaintest characters. A thin, scrawny old fellow, he built a three-room oyster house about half way out on the wharf. There he lived with his family and served oysters, either raw or cooked, to the public. With each order of oysters he donated a big glass of corn beer, a potent beverage guaranteed to give any drinker a "desired dizzy" in record time.

The village pranksters usually enlisted Bacon's help when they wanted to have a little fun. One day they learned that Gillespie had just received a new shipment of good Kentucky rye. They called upon Bacon to devise a way by which they could get some of the precious liquor. He scratched his head, thought a while, and then reached in his pocket, drew out his knife and pricked his arm twice. When blood covered his arm, he hollered as though in fearful pain—hollered so loud that Gillespie, a hundred yards away, heard him and came running. When he approached, Bacon moaned: "Gosh, Mr. Gillespie, a big rattler got me! Oh, that pizen's going all through me! I'm a goner sure!"

Gillespie responded as Bacon had expected. "You need some whiskey! Quick! I'll get it for you!" He ran into his warehouse and came out with a bottle of Old Crow. Bacon took a big swig, and then slumped down. His companions took the bottle and, behind Gillespie's back, passed it around. In a few minutes the bottle was emptied. Gillespie soon learned he had been fooled. But just to show he wasn't offended, he brought out another bottle. Then everyone was happy.

One of the finest homes south of Tampa was built by Gillespie in the summer and fall of 1886 on the present site of the Mira Mar Hotel. The contract for its construction was let to John Browning and Charles Jones, and the sons of both men helped in the work. The rooms were large and high ceilinged and a veranda extended around three sides of the house. The lot was enclosed by a picket fence—and the pickets were all made by hand out of rough lumber.

Gillespie's name will live in history mainly because he introduced golf to Florida.

Here in Sarasota he built perhaps the first practice course in the entire country—two greens and a long fairway. This miniature course was located on Main Street in a natural clearing in the woods close to the present Central School. He laid it out in May, 1886, and practiced there daily for many years. He later had another practice course near his home.

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J. HAMILTON GILLESPIE

—Sarasota's No. 1 citizen for three decades

Alex Browning told of crossing the course one day and seeing Gillespie chopping away at the little ball. He had never seen anyone playing golf before, even though he was from Scotland. He stopped to watch the tall, intent Scot. "Do you play?" asked Gillespie. When Browning admitted he knew nothing of the game, Gillespie said disapprovingly: "Mon, y'er missing half y'er life!"

Gillespie later sold Henry B. Plant on the value of golf as a Florida tourist attraction and was hired to lay out courses for the Plant Investment Co. at Winter Park, Tampa, Bellair and Havana, Cuba.

Golf was Gillespie's obsession throughout his life. In 1905, he laid out a real golf course on a 110-acre tract east of his old practice course and built a club house. He maintained the course at his own expense for many years. Truly, he was the father of golf in Sarasota and one of the most prominent early golfers in the entire country. On September 7, 1923, while playing on his golf course, he suffered a heart attack—and died a few hours later.

Ironically enough, this golf pioneer has been practically forgotten by the city of Sarasota. When a municipal golf course was laid out, it was named after a man who never even lived in Sarasota—and deigned to play at the dedication ceremonies only after he had been promised a fine automobile as a gift.

But that's certainly straying far afield from the story of Sarasota. Let's get back again to the late Eighties, when Gillespie was in the prime of life—and the village of Sarasota was very young indeed.

### *The Boom Booms—and Bursts!*

The infant village of Sarasota threw off its swaddling clothes in the fall of 1886 and bragged about its being the fastest growing, most prosperous community on the entire West Coast south of Tampa.

And sure enough, Sarasota was a rushing, bustling place. The imposing new De Soto Hotel on the waterfront was being rushed to completion. Streets were being opened through the woods, in all parts of town. The company store was being enlarged. A fine wooden sidewalk was being laid on the north side of Main Street from Palm Avenue to the Five Points.

To speed the work along, Gillespie sent out word that good jobs were available in Sarasota and craftsmen and laborers flocked here from other towns, some coming from as far away as Jacksonville.

The boom was on. Every room in the Sarasota House was filled, two to six persons in each room. The overflow lived in tents and shacks scattered along Main Street and the waterfront. Some of the workmen bunked in schooners anchored in the bay. Big wages for those days were paid by

Gillespie's company— \$2 a day for craftsmen and \$1.25 for common laborers. In cash. And on pay day nights, almost everyone celebrated in the time-honored manner of frontier towns, by doing almost everything that's frowned upon by "good people."

Many of the newcomers were rough and rugged adventurers and they lived a hard life. Most of them were heavy drinkers and fist fights and drunken brawls were common occurrences. For the next year or so, Sarasota was a wild and wooly community in which almost anything could happen—and did!

Despite the occasional carousals, work went steadily ahead. Three more buildings were erected on the north side of Main between Palm and Pineapple. One, located about half-way up the block, was built by John Iversen who had just married and wanted a new home "in town" for his bride. Years later, the building was used as a printing shop by C. V. S. Wilson, founder of the Sarasota Times.

The two other buildings erected in the same block were built by Alfred Grable, a builder from Lakeland who was attracted here by the "boom." The buildings were large two-story houses. One was occupied by Mrs. Susanna Bartholomew, and her three children. The second, located at the corner of Main and Pineapple, was used for many years as a town meeting place. Church services were held there, and also dances, as the occasion required.

Sarasota continued to grow. The Florida Mortgage & Investment Co. built a two-story "office-building" on the southwest corner of Eighth and Central. Gillespie kept his office there for many years. In the same locality, a home was built by William Whitcomb, uncle of the poet James Whitcomb Riley. Whitcomb had homesteaded five years before in the northern part of the present Sarasota County—now he wanted to get into town so his two sons could get "some schooling."

First, however, Sarasota had to have a school. So Whitcomb launched a movement to get a school building erected. Gillespie paid for the lumber and the work was performed, without charge, by volunteers who were determined that Sarasota must forge ahead and provide "educational opportunities" for its children.

The first school was a small one-room building, 16 feet wide and 25 feet long, decorated with a gable at each end. It was located on the south side of Main about 100 feet east of Pineapple. The children sat on homemade benches and their desks were crude affairs. There was no stove in the school and during the winter, when cold spells came, the youngsters sat and shivered.

But they had good teachers to instruct them—Anna and Sue Whitcomb, who had been well educated in northern schools. The Whitcomb

girls served without pay. The first pupils were Emile and Flora Whitaker, Eliza Liddell, Fred and Howard Whitcomb, Alice Bartholomew, Charles Vincent, Hattie Bacon, Lillie Tatum, and Jessie, Hugh, Ewina and Maggie Browning.

The Whitcomb girls taught only one year. Their thoughts soon were occupied with other matters. They were married on the same day in the first double wedding ever held in Sarasota. Sue became the bride of Charles C. Whitaker while Anna became the wife of George Riffin. When the happy young couples started on their honeymoon, the entire community joined in the shivaree.

Soon after Sarasota got its first school, the up-and-coming village also got a postoffice "right in the business district."

A post office had been established in 1878 in Charles E. Abbe's store in the community of Sara Sota, south of Hudson Bayou. But the "town folk" insisted this old post office was way out in the sticks and they circulated petitions to have it moved into the village. The old settlers of Sara Sota objected, but they were outnumbered by the new Sarasotans and their protests were unheeded. On May 14, 1887, Charles Whitaker was appointed postmaster and the post office was moved to the Whitaker store on Main Street. The Sarasotans now could get their mail without trudging through the woods to the Abbe store, more than a mile and a half away.

The Scotch company set forth, early in 1887, to prove to all skeptics that its land was the most fertile in the entire state—and would grow anything. To accomplish this, Gillespie ordered work started on a 40-acre experimental farm on the Fruitville road. A gang of negroes cleared about ten acres and cultivated the soil. Then crops were planted—tomatoes, lettuce, green beans, cabbage—just about everything Gillespie could think of. Even a few orange trees.

Unfortunately, Gillespie selected as the site of the experimental farm one of the most sterile tracts in the entire region. He knew nothing about the spotty nature of Florida soil—and he wouldn't listen to advice. "Any Florida cracker could have told Gillespie that nothing would grow well in that locality—and nothing did grow," says A. B. Edwards. "It was the sorriest ground you ever saw and the farm was a complete failure."

Gillespie wouldn't admit he had selected poor land, however, until after several vain attempts to grow crops. He first fertilized heavily and then he tried treating the ground with lime "to sweeten it." But neither the lime nor the fertilizer helped and before a year passed, Gillespie gave up the experimental farm in disgust.

However, the farm paid one big dividend. Because of it, the settlers at Fruitville got a church. When Jesse Tucker learned that Gillespie want-

ed lime, he went to him and got a contract to supply 100 barrels at a dollar a barrel. Armed with this contract, Tucker called his neighbors together and told them—all staunch Baptists—that here was a heaven-sent opportunity to raise the money to pay for a church building.

Fruitville thereupon called a community "work-for-the-church-day" and everyone, men, women, and children, went to White Beach where they gathered immense heaps of coon and oyster shells. Pine trees, rich in turpentine, were felled and cut into fifteen-foot lengths. Then two "lime kilns" were made, layers of wood alternating with layers of shells; about eight feet high. The wood was set afire and while the piles burned, a picnic lunch was served. From the ashes, the needed lime was obtained; Gillespie paid the \$100, and the Fruitville Missionary Baptist Church was built, in June, 1887.

The men who took part in this lime-making project were Rev. Isaac Redd, C. L. Reeves, John Tatum, Stephen Goins, and Jesse, Frank and Emmett Tucker.

The Scotch experimental farm may have been the indirect cause of the first death in the new village of Sarasota. Tom Booth, one of the colonists who lingered here after most of the others left, was employed at the farm to help direct the work of the negroes. Instead of merely acting as foreman, he did more work than anyone and his friends declared he literally worked himself to death. Be that as it may, he died, on March 17, 1887, and everyone in Sarasota attended his funeral. Gillespie read the Episcopal service and the body was buried in the plot of land on Central Avenue which the company had set aside as the town cemetery, later named Rosemary Cemetery.

Six months later, four more persons were buried in the cemetery—a mother and her three small children. They were the victims of a man who had become insane, Elaf Green, a carpenter who had come here to work on the De Soto Hotel.

Early Saturday morning, September 10, 1887, Green stopped at Whitaker's store and calmly remarked that he had killed his wife and his son and two daughters. He said he had cut their throats while they were sleeping and then had driven a two-inch chisel through their necks. At first, no one believed him. But when he insisted he was telling the truth, three men went out to Green's home at the edge of the town to investigate. They discovered, to their horror, that the murders had actually been committed, as Green had described.

Sheriff A. S. "Sandy" Watson was notified and he rushed to Sarasota and placed Green under arrest. Appointing Charles Whitaker as a deputy sheriff for the emergency, he started back to Bradenton. The sheriff and Green rode in a buggy and Whitaker followed on horseback. At a fork

in the road, Green suddenly became insanely violent. He threw the sheriff out of the buggy, grabbed his gun and raised it to fire. But before he could pull the trigger, Whitaker shot and killed him. Green's body was left lying on the road until a coroner's jury was impanelled, made an investigation, and exonerated Whitaker. Green's body was buried where he fell. For many years thereafter, many persons said that neighborhood was haunted.

The tragedy of the Green murders intensified a wave of gloom which swept over Sarasota late in the summer of 1887. Without being told, the Sarasotans began to realize that the building boom had ended—and that dull, drear years lay ahead.

The De Soto Hotel, the Grable buildings, and Gillespie's home all were finished about the same time. When they were completed, and the experimental farm abandoned, jobs ended. The stream of money which had kept the village flourishing, suddenly went dry. Craftsmen and laborers began leaving. The Sarasota House became almost deserted. Weeds started growing high in the streets which had been cleared just a few months before.

Sarasota was in the doldrums. It could hardly have been otherwise. The Scotch colony had collapsed and the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co. could not induce other people to pay the \$10 or more per acre which it then demanded for its land.



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Lower Main Street in 1888. The weeds seen in the street grew higher and thicker during the lean years which followed.

The full effects of the state's action in turning over practically all the land in the Sarasota region to the land speculators now began to be felt. If the territory still would have been open to homesteaders, new settlers undoubtedly would have continued to come in, just as they did from 1867 to 1883, and the Land of Sarasota would have continued to develop. But now the land grabbers had the land—and potential settlers stayed away.

To make matters even worse, Sarasota had absolutely no industries to provide employment for its people. Oh, yes, persons who were so inclined could farm—if they had the land—or fish. But even farming or fishing were not particularly remunerative because of a lack of nearby markets and, worse still, a complete lack of transportation facilities.

The *Mary Disston* stopped coming to Sarasota early in 1887, and never again made the village a port of call. No other steamer took its place, largely because a channel north through Sarasota Bay had not yet been opened, providing a short cut to Tampa Bay. Such a channel was to come in 1895—but that didn't help Sarasotans any in 1887.

As for railroads, there wasn't a mile of track south of Tampa, despite the fact that the state had given at least 350,000 acres of Manatee-Sarasota land to railroad companies in 1883 and 1884. Those grants may have helped other sections of the state get transportation but they certainly didn't help the Land of Sarasota.

No one realized better than Gillespie the absolute necessity of getting a railroad for Sarasota, if not from Tampa then at least from Bradenton where connections could be made with steamers which ran to Tampa.

Always a man of action, Gillespie set the wheels in motion to get a railroad. Five years later, he succeeded. But what a railroad!

### *A Train Snorts Into Town!*

Sarasotans called it the "Slow and Wobbly"—that so-called railroad which ran its first train from Bradenton to Sarasota on May 16, 1892. It was a comic strip railroad if there ever was one.

The engine was a dilapidated, second-hand wood burner, with a huge fire-box and a towering smokestack which poured forth soot and sparks. The "train" consisted of two flat cars, one of which was covered with a canvas canopy to protect the passengers from sun, and rain, and smoke. This car, which had uncovered plank seats, was dignified by the name of "the day coach."

Little if any ballast had been used when the tracks were laid and, as a result, the train always wobbled and staggered along, appearing every moment as though it would upset. And it often did! One time the engine rolled over when it reached the water tower just outside Bradenton, and

the tower collapsed. After that the engineer siphoned the water needed out of ponds along the right of way.

The train never operated on a regular schedule, even at the beginning. The train crew, made up of James Nichols, the engineer, and Lou Duckwall, the conductor, left Bradenton whenever they got enough of a load to make the trip worth while. Once started, the train squeaked and rattled its way toward Sarasota and rarely reached its destination without a breakdown. On one trip, the train rocked so badly that Duckwall's dinner pail rolled off the day coach. He didn't miss it until a half hour later. He then told Nichols of his loss—and the engineer backed the train four miles to retrieve the pail and prevent Duckwall from going hungry.

The Sarasota "station"—a little one-room shack—was located about 100 feet west of Orange Avenue near Tenth Street, way out in the woods.

Because of the train's irregular schedule, the people of Sarasota rarely traveled on it to the county seat at Bradenton. They could make better time by horse and buggy, despite the sandy roads. Quite often, however, the young people of Sarasota and Bradenton took the train just for a lark. "It was more fun, going on that rickety railroad, than going on a roller-coaster," declares Mrs. Gertrude Higel.

C. Woodburn Matheny recalls traveling on the Slow and Wobbly on October 25, 1892, when his parents, Mr. and Mrs. George H. Matheny, came here from Springfield, Ill., to settle at Osprey.

"Our household goods were brought to Bradenton by steamer," Matheny recalls. "My father had heard a railroad ran as far as Sarasota. But when he inquired about it, he learned the train ran only when the crew could get a paying load. So he began dickering with the conductor, who wasn't any too anxious to make the trip. But when my father offered him \$10 in cash, the conductor became all smiles—I guess \$10 was more money than the crew had made for many a day.

"Anyhow, we finally got all our goods loaded on the flat cars and started off. Along the way we had to stop to siphon water out of a pond. A little farther on we had to wait an hour or so while some negroes chopped wood for the engine. Later, we stopped several times because cows got on the track and wouldn't move off until the engineer chased them away with a stick. It was the craziest railroad I ever saw—but we finally got to Sarasota."

The Slow and Wobbly kept operating spasmodically for about two years. Then the tracks were torn up and later sold, on March 13, 1895, to O. M. Crossley for use in building a narrow-gauge railroad out of Avon Park. The engine and flat cars were left to rust and disintegrate on a siding near Bradenton.

Few persons in Sarasota ever heard the full account of the founding of the Slow and Wobbly and the various deals involved in its construction and ultimate collapse. The story is worth recording because it sheds some light on what was happening in this region during the Dreary Nineties.

In 1890, the affairs of the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co., Ltd., were in a sorry state. So were the affairs of another British land speculating concern, the Florida Land & Mortgage Co., Ltd., which had acquired 137,390 acres from Disston's concern. This latter concern was represented here by Piers E. Warburton and later by B. A. Coachman. The two British concerns were closely tied together—but it is difficult indeed to determine just where their interests overlapped.

However, that's unimportant. The point that's pertinent is that the stockholders of both concerns began clamoring for some kind of a return on their investments. But no returns were possible simply because both companies had gone to pot—all their ventures had turned out poorly.

In an effort to stave off the angry wrath of the British stockholders, Gillespie became a "railroader," and sent back word to the British Isles that Sarasota soon would have a railroad and everything from then on would be lovely.

Gillespie had a good scheme. Or, at least, a scheme which sounded good when he told about it to prospects. It was really quite simple—and foolproof! The two British concerns, said Gillespie, would give every alternate section of land along the proposed right of way to the railroad company. After the tracks were laid, he declared, and the trains began running, the land could be sold at a tremendous profit. Fortunes would be made!

The project sounded so attractive that Gillespie secured the backing of Harvey N. Shepard, of Boston; W. C. Patten and J. H. Humphries, of Bradenton, and Joseph Voyle, of Gainesville. These men, with Gillespie, incorporated the Manatee & Sarasota Railway and Drainage Co., April 12, 1890, for \$50,000. Gillespie was made president of the company.

The promised land was conveyed to the concern—providing the railroad would be built and in operation by February 22, 1892. The agreement was signed by Francis More, of Edinburgh, who had been named liquidator of the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co., Ltd.

Everything looked rosy. The incorporators of the railroad company paid in about \$18,000 and work of laying the tracks was started, in the fall of 1890. But more money was required. Gillespie and his associates thought they would have no difficulty floating a bond issue in New York and get all the money they needed. But fate was against them. Storm

clouds presaging the great depression of 1893 had begun to gather—and the bond market dried up. Work on the railroad was halted.

In a desperate move to get the project completed, Gillespie and associates assigned their interest in the land agreement to the Arcadia, Gulf Coast & Lakeland Railroad Co., on October 23, 1891. This concern of imposing name was incorporated by a special act of the state legislature in 1891. On paper, it had a capital stock of \$1,500,000. But it was a speculative enterprise, pure and simple, and if any of the capital stock ever was sold, certainly none of it went for railroad construction.

The railroad was finished, sure enough, but the contractors who handled the last phase of the job never got paid for their work. Neither did the laborers the contractors had employed. From the day the first train ran until the tracks were torn up, the concern was constantly involved in law suits. It never paid salaries to the train's engineer and conductor—the only money they ever received was what was paid to them for fares or freight.

The company didn't even pay its taxes. At one time, county officials ordered the engine chained to the rails until the tax bill was paid. The sheriff did his duty and the engine was rail-bound for a week. Then the county officials learned the railroad company existed in name only so they decided the train might as well be permitted to keep on wobbling along. It did—when the crew saw fit!

The contractors, laborers, and the conductor and engineer finally employed Judge J. J. Stewart to sue the railroad in an attempt to get the money they had coming to them. The judge got a judgment easily enough but collecting was a different story. The railroad had no saleable assets except the tracks and a little equipment. All this was sold. The judge later said he didn't get enough money from the sale to pay his fee—whether his clients ever got anything is not recorded.

So the Slow and Wobbly ceased wobbling—and Sarasota had to wait nearly a decade longer before a real railroad came, to give the village a new lease on life. But, strange though it may seem, Old Slow and Wobbly set the wheels in motion for the coming of the Ringlings to Sarasota.

### *Gillespie Has His Troubles*

Fate was unkind to Sarasota for many years after the boom of 1886-87. It was also unkind to J. Hamilton Gillespie. He had wife trouble—serious wife trouble. So serious that the whole village was affected.

Mrs. Mary Gillespie, the first wife of the doughty Scotsman, was a cantankerous woman. There's no doubt about it. She also liked her wee nips of Scotch, or Kentucky bourbon, or plain Cuban rum. Sometimes the wee nips became drinks large enough to floor a stevedore. When that

happened, Mrs. Gillespie's cantankerousness was embarrassing, to put it mildly.

Gillespie was an ardent Episcopalian and often served as lay reader at church services held in the Grable building. One Sunday, after the services had started, Mrs. Gillespie came in and took a seat close to the pulpit where her dignified husband was solemnly preaching. Then, to the consternation of the congregation, she opened a large red silk parasol and held it over her head until the service was over.

Rather unsteadily she then stood up, closed the parasol, waved a hand at her husband, and said: "Nice goin', darling!" Red-faced with embarrassment, Gillespie did not look at her. She left the building and weaved down the wooden sidewalk to the De Soto.

As a direct result of that incident, the Methodists of Sarasota decided to get a church of their own. No longer were they willing to worship in a building where such shenanigans occurred. It was bad enough to use a room where dances were held occasionally but to meet in a place where a parasol was raised during a service—well, that was the last straw!

Their minds made up, the Methodists proceeded to make plans for acquiring a church. Getting a site was easy—one of the finest spots in the village was presented to them as a gift by Harry L. Higel, who paid \$40 to the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co. for the property, the southeast corner of Main and Pineapple. The deed, made out to the Methodist Episcopal Church, was dated September 15, 1892.

During the winter following, the Methodists erected a small church on their land, just cater-corner from the watering trough and hitching posts at Five Points. It was a very plain little building but the members revered it as their place of worship. Now they would be safe from red parasols.

Mrs. Gillespie's "gay spirits", the direct cause of the construction of the Methodist Church, ruined her husband's hopes of having an Episcopal Church established here.

To speed the process, Gillespie invited an Episcopalian bishop to be his guest at the De Soto. The bishop came, accompanied by several other dignitaries.

While they were being served dinner, Mrs. Gillespie entered the dining room at exactly the wrong moment. She lurched into a waiter while he was serving soup to the bishop. All the soup in the tureen spilled on the bishop's lap. Red-faced—and perhaps red-stomached—the bishop arose and strode from the room. He left the De Soto the next day. Needless to say, Sarasota did not then get its Episcopal Church.

Because of Mrs. Gillespie's actions on this and other occasions, Mr. and Mrs. Jones gave up their leases on the De Soto. Backed by some of

their wealthy guests, they acquired a beautiful lot on the bayfront a little south of the present 33rd Street, and erected a large building for use as a private club. The structure was planned by Alex Browning and constructed in 1891 by Wadhams & Jacobs, of Bradenton. Later, it was known as the Palms Hotel. The hotel was sold early in 1916 to T. M. Clark, of Onway, Mich. It burned down in 1927.

Many of the De Soto's best guests followed the Jones' to their new place and Sarasota's swanky hotel suffered a severe blow. It remained closed several years and not until after 1900 did it regain its former standing as a winter home for the elite.

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Sarasota's Methodists beamed with pride in 1905 when their church on the southwest corner of Main and Pineapple was freshly painted and adorned with a belfry.

Early in the Nineties, Mrs. Gillespie vanished from the Sarasota scene. She and her husband lived in Bradenton a while and then they went to Scotland. Some old timers say she died there—others say Gillespie divorced her. In all events, she never returned to Sarasota. Much later, on May 23, 1905, Gillespie married a woman of culture and dignity, Miss Blanche McDaniel, in a wedding attended by the leading citizens of the entire locality.

*Sarasota Marks Time*

The entire Sarasota region suffered a staggering blow during the winter of 1894-95, the coldest in the history of the state. During the night of December 27, 1894, the temperature fell to 17 degrees above zero. All vegetables were killed and the citrus crop was ruined.

The extreme cold was followed by six weeks of unusually warm weather. New crops of vegetables were just getting started. Citrus trees took on new life. But then an even worse freeze occurred, on the night of February 8, 1895. The mercury plummeted to 14, the lowest in the memory of man. The new vegetable crops were killed. Young citrus trees were frozen to the ground. During that winter, the grove owners and vegetable growers received hardly a dollar for their labor.

Strangely enough, however, the two cold spells ultimately helped the Land of Sarasota more than they harmed it. South of the broad Manatee River, the frosts were by no means as severe as they were farther north where practically all the groves were completely destroyed. Here, the frost-nipped older trees came to life again and during the following year bore almost a normal crop.

A few statistics tell the story. During the season of 1893-94, before the big freezes, approximately 6,000,000 boxes of fruit were shipped from Florida. Two years later, only 75,000 boxes were shipped. Of that total, 50,000 boxes were shipped from groves south of the Manatee. Growers here received \$12 a box for grapefruit on the trees and \$8 a box for oranges.

Here are the growers who reaped a golden harvest during that short-crop year: C. L. Reeves, Emmett Tucker, W. R. Gocio, George Tatum, Don Tippet, Henry Hawkins, Rev. I. A. Redd, A. M. Wilson, William Rawls, H. V. Whitaker, George H. Matheny, E. R. Marsh, Dr. J. H. Bissel, Judge John G. Webb, H. W. Surgenier, Samuel C. Corwin, Peter Crocker, F. R. Knight, J. J. Knight, and George Higel.

The fact that groves in this area escaped being killed by the devastating cold weather of 1894-95 brought a number of new settlers to this locality from farther north in Florida. They wanted a spot where the work of years would not be wiped out in a few nights—and here they found what they wanted. Many of the groves they planted are still bearing.

During 1895, Sarasota first began to be called "a fishing village." And with good reason. The fishing industry here began to flourish as it had never flourished before.

True enough, there had been fishermen here for at least a century before 1895. First, itinerant Cuban and Spanish fishermen, like Alzartie and Phillippi, who lived in palmetto shacks along the bay or on the keys.

Then Bill Whitaker, who got his start by selling dry salt mullet and roe to Cuban traders. Then, John L. Edwards with his "fish ranch." Also, many, many others whose names have disappeared in the mists of time, usually because they were wanderers who seldom stayed long enough in one place to be remembered.

All these early fishermen salted their fish and sun-cured them. They had no trouble selling all they caught to traders who supplied the Cuban market or took them farther north to the cotton belt.

Beginning in 1884, however, the demand for salted fish declined while the demand for fresh fish increased tremendously. The reasons are simple. Henry B. Plant had built a railroad into Tampa connecting it with the outside world by rail. Moreover, ice plants were built in Tampa. Fish packed in ice now could be sent direct from Tampa on the railroad to all parts of the country. Naturally, fresh fish were preferred to salted fish. So, in this section, Tampa began to corner the fish business. Its wholesale dealers were supplied by fishermen who lived along the shores of Tampa Bay at places which could be reached by Tampa steamers, carrying the ice needed for shipment.

However, the steamers did not find it profitable to come to Sarasota after the boom of 1886-87 had ended. The skippers did not like to make the long, round-about trip through the open Gulf and into the bay at Sarasota Pass. So they stayed away and the fishing industry here languished.

The situation changed in 1895. In that year, the U. S. Dredge Suwanee cut a channel across the shoal at Palma Sola Pass, in Upper Sarasota Bay, and another channel at Longbar, southeast of Longboat Inlet, in Sarasota Bay. The cost to the government of these dredging operations—if you care to know—was exactly \$9,998.43. The work was authorized by the River and Harbor acts of 1890, 1892 and 1894.

With the channels completed, steamers of shallow draft could take the inland waterway from Tampa Bay directly to the wharf at Sarasota and make profitable stops at fishermen's wharves along the way.

The first steamer which went on the Sarasota run was the *Mistletoe*, owned by John Savarese, of Tampa, one of the state's leading fish dealers and merchants. The *Mistletoe* made its maiden trip here on Monday, October 7, 1895. Thereafter, it came here regularly from Tampa every Monday, Wednesday and Friday and made the return trips on the days following. Harry L. Higel was the first local agent of the line.

Judged by present day standards, the *Mistletoe* wasn't much of a steamer. But in the eyes of the Sarasotans, it was something grand. And the shrill sound of its whistle, blown as it came down the bay, was music

to their ears. Each time the steamer docked, nearly the whole town turned out to see if any strangers were aboard.

Without exaggerating, it can be said that the coming of the *Mistletoe* meant more to Sarasota, and to Sarasota's back country, than anything in the region's history. Infinitely more than the coming of the Scotch colony, which failed, and even more than the building of the De Soto, which most of the time was empty and boarded up.

Now the Sarasotans no longer would have to depend upon schooners which left the bay only when the skippers got the notion, and a full cargo. The community now had a dependable connection with the outside world. Sarasotans could go to the "big stores" in Tampa to do their shopping—and the vegetables and fruits of the Land of Sarasota could be taken more easily to Tampa markets for sale. No wonder Sarasota rejoiced.

With the *Mistletoe* in regular operation, more fishermen settled here and several wholesale fish houses were opened. In the beginning, the fishing industry was a tiny infant, true enough, but it grew rapidly. Before ten years elapsed, it was the mainstay of the village and the fishermen's votes swung many elections, perhaps not always to the benefit of Sarasota.

There was no danger, in the early days, of fishermen catching all the fish. The supply seemed inexhaustible. Here's one description of the fish situation back in the Nineties, written by J. W. Walden:

"In 1895 I went to Bradenton in Capt. Frank Blackburn's *Sea Turtle*. As we approached Sarasota Pass, we met, with the incoming tide, a school of mullet. The fish darted to and fro in the sea green water. They bumped against the boat. They leaped over the rudder. I captured two six-pounders with my dip net while they were leaping through the air. The school literally filled the pass—it was more than a mile long. If there was one fish in that school, there were at least a million. It was a sight I shall never forget."

Mullet were not the only fish which were plentiful. Alex Browning, in his memoirs, told of great catches of red fish, blue fish, red snapper, grouper and mackerel—catches so large the fishermen's boats were sometimes nearly swamped. He asserted he never heard of a fisherman who went out and didn't bring back a boatload, regardless of the weather.

But none of the fishermen became wealthy, despite their huge hauls. Many old time fishermen say they considered themselves lucky if they could get a dollar for a hundred pounds of fish—often the price dropped much lower.

During the Spanish-American war, however, when nearly 40,000 troops were stationed at Tampa for months, awaiting transports to take them to Cuba, the fishermen made a clean-up. The demand for fish soared to unheard of peaks—and prices rose accordingly. The fishermen

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A half century ago, steamers provided Sarasotans their only connection with the outside world. Above is shown the *Mistletoe*, the first steamer which came here regularly, beginning in 1895. Below is the *Vandalia*, owned by Harry L. Higel.

made enough money to buy better boats and more nets—and the industry expanded.

The Spanish-American war also brought prosperity to the cattlemen of the Land of Sarasota. From the Myakka plains and the grazing grounds of the "Knight domain" in the Venice area, thousands of cattle were driven to slaughter houses at the edge of Tampa to supply meat for the hungry soldiers and booming town. There was no OPA then to regulate prices and the cattlemen truly made a killing.

The cattle industry continued to thrive for a number of years after the war ended in Cuba. The island was stripped of cattle during the Cuban rebellion and subsequent American invasion. To supply the Cuban demand for meat, the Knights sold almost all the cattle they had, shipping them from Charlotte Harbor. Other cattlemen drove their cattle to Shaw's Point, near Bradenton, and to Punta Rassa. All got fantastic prices—and they accumulated gorgeous piles of Spanish doubloons. 'Tis said that many of the cattlemen's heirs are still prosperous from fortunes made as a result of the Cubans' war for independence.

The war-made fortunes helped the village of Sarasota not one bit. The cattlemen invested their money in land or deposited it in Tampa banks. They made few purchases in Sarasota stores, preferring to do business in "the big city" up the bay. Even the fishermen bought their equipment from out of town.

So, despite the war boom, the village of Sarasota continued to languish. Many said it was dying of "dry-rot." But there was a spark of life still left in Sarasota—and it did not die out.

### *Sarasota Gets a Newspaper*

C. V. S. Wilson was a daring man. Also, an optimist. Had he not been both, he never would have done what he did in the late spring of 1899—start a newspaper in Sarasota.

What a place to go into the newspaper business! Not even a thriving village! Just a spot on the map, and a very faint spot at that. In the 1900 census, the enumerators did not even recognize its existence by listing it among the communities of the county!

Sarasota had not advanced one step during the preceding decade. In fact, it had slipped backward. The streets were grown high with weeds; hogs wallowed in the mud at the foot of Main Street; cattle roamed over the streets. The wooden sidewalk on the north side of Main Street had decayed. No street lights; no hard-surfaced roads; no railroad; no doctors or dentists. Not even an undertaker!

The village had a hotel, true enough, but it was boarded up most of the time because no manager could get enough guests to make ends meet.

The reputation of the Sarasota House, at Main and Central, was none too good. A murder had been committed there a short time before and people whispered that no attempt ever had been made to prosecute the murderer.

What about stores? Well, there were two general stores, but both were next door to bankruptcy. Also, a tiny combination fruit store and barber shop. No restaurants; no drug stores.

Anything else? Hardly anything except a run-down livery stable and a blacksmith shop. And, oh yes, J. Hamilton Gillespie, the village's lone attorney, real estate agent, justice of the peace, et cetera.

In the entire area included in the "town plat" of Sarasota, not more than a dozen families lived. The population of the entire locality, including the old community of Sara Sota as well as Bee Ridge and Fruitville, did not exceed 300, including men, women and children. Throw in Osprey, Venice, Myakka and all the rest of the territory now called Sarasota County, and you couldn't have found a total population of more than 600!

Surely no newspaper could exist in such a microscopic village as Sarasota with such a thinly settled back country! But exist the paper did! Through all the years that intervened before Sarasota finally hit its stride, and started to be the city it is today! And until Sarasota County broke away from Manatee and Sarasota became the county seat!

How did this newspaper miracle occur? The answer to that question is C. V. S. Wilson—and his wife! They were determined that the paper must go to press, come what may, and they never wavered. Not even when advertising dwindled to the vanishing point and Wilson had to dig deep into his savings to meet expenses. They kept the paper going, plugged eternally for Sarasota, and prayed for better days.

A native of New York, Wilson came to Florida in 1882 and founded a newspaper in Longwood, near Orlando. The village failed to develop, so Wilson moved his plant to Bradenton where he started the Manatee County Advocate, in 1888. Later, he printed his paper in the village of Manatee.

There the newspaper got a footing. But Wilson was not satisfied. The Land of Sarasota lured him—and he had a hunch that unkempt Sarasota was a village with a future. For months he mulled over the idea of bringing his paper here. Early in 1899 he made up his mind. He was spurred in coming to a decision by a report that Sarasota was enjoying a boom!

What a boom! It consisted of the sale of the De Soto Hotel—and 200 feet more of waterfront land south of the hotel—for \$1,500! No, not \$1,500 a front foot for the land but \$1,500 for the hotel and all the land—the whole caboodle!

That wasn't all. Another big sale was made at the same time. The Sarasota House, including all the land on which the Palmer National Bank and Lord's Arcade now stand, sold for \$500!

No better proof than these sales could be offered to show the depths to which the once boastful village of Sarasota had sunk. However, the sales at least indicated that someone had faith in the future of the village. Otherwise, neither the hotel nor the rooming house could have been sold at any price.

The De Soto Hotel and waterfront land were sold by the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co., April 28, 1899, to a syndicate of Tampa men headed by R. A. Crowell and John Savarese. They announced they intended to open it as a summer resort for Tampa people. Also, that they had big plans for the future.

The fact that Tampa business men had an eye on Sarasota was enough to convince Wilson that Sarasota was the place for him. So here he came—and on June 1, 1899, he published the first issue of his newspaper, the Sarasota Times, on a Washington hand press from hand-set type. Thereafter, the newspaper never missed an issue until it was sold more than twenty-two years later!

Originally, the Times was a four-page paper, a little larger than present day tabloids. But the four pages provided ample space for all the advertising and news. Plenty!

The De Soto Hotel monopolized Page 1 of the early issues of the Times with a large two-column ad in which I. P. Crowell, the manager, stated that the hotel had just been completely renovated and furnished and made ready for guests.

Said the advertisement: "The hotel is fitted with modern improvements, including baggage elevator, bath room on every floor, observatory enclosed with glass on top of the hotel to which has been added several bath houses on the Gulf Beach where Surf Bathing can be enjoyed." An observatory with Gulf Beach bath houses—now wasn't that something!

The advertisement also boasted of the meals served at the hotel: "The table is excellent and supplied with endless varieties of food including the celebrated Sarasota oysters and clams, all kinds of fresh fish and vegetables, and northern meats."

Joe Vincent, manager of the Sarasota House, also advertised fine meals and the fact that his place had just been completely renovated.

Grantham & Broadway, dealers in groceries, corn, oats and hay, dry-goods, clothing and novelties, bought extra advertising space to announce that the firm had just established "a fish ranch and will be prepared to furnish fresh fish by the hundred or thousands from August 15 through the season. The fish will be here and the salt to pack them with." This

firm, owned by Elijah Grantham and Dave Broadway, had its store in the building formerly occupied by the Whitaker & Smith Livery Stable at Main and Palm.

George A. Cason, who owned the old company store at Main and Gulf Stream, advertised that he was dealing in dry goods, groceries, feed and general merchandise. H. B. Harris advertised that he had ice cream and cool drinks for sale as well as fresh fruits, tobacco and cigars. He also announced he had just opened a barber shop in the rear of his store where he could serve patrons.

The Florida Land & Improvement Co., the Disston concern, announced it had 40,000 acres for sale which it would sell on easy terms in tracts of 40 acres or more for \$3 an acre, or more, depending upon the location.

The Alzartie House, next to the Palms Hotel, up on Indian Beach, advertised it would take guests at \$5 a week for room and board. The owner, John Helveston, stated that "fishing and hunting are now unusually fine and tarpon are plentiful."

T. L. Broadway, manager of the Mail Hack Line from Bradenton to Sarasota, advertised that his hack "will meet the steamers at Bradenton and convey passengers and baggage to Sarasota, Osprey, Venice or Myakka." He stated that "This line carries the United States Mail and goes every day except Sundays." The hack left Sarasota at 7 a.m., arrived in Bradenton at 11 a.m., started back about 1 p.m. and pulled up to the post office in the Cason store about 5 p.m.

John Savarese advertised the fact that the steamer *Mistletoe* was making three trips a week between Sarasota and Tampa, "stopping at Palm Beach, Indian Beach, Cortez and Anna Maria." He said the boats left here at 7 a.m. and arrived at Tampa at 2 p.m., connecting with the Florida Central and Peninsular Railroad and the Plant System. W. R. Fuller was named as general freight and passenger agent of the Savarese firm and C. A. Roux, assistant agent.

Editor Wilson advertised that beautiful wall paper, "best quality and latest designs," could be ordered at the newspaper office. Priced from 3 cents a roll and up.

One of the choice bits of news in June 22, 1899, issue, the earliest one existing, was that the De Soto Hotel had been opened with a big celebration Wednesday night, June 14. The editor didn't go into details but he commented: "Judging from the drooping appearance of some of our people's eyes they must have attended the ball at the hotel." More than a hundred persons were at the opening, including a party of fifty from Tampa brought down on the steamer *Mistletoe*.

Another news story told about Hamlin V. Whitaker having left for Key West in his schooner *Sammy Lee*, taking a load of 80 hogs, 40 bushels of sweet potatoes, and 70 watermelons.

A new business firm was started in Sarasota the same day the first issue of the Times appeared by a man from North Florida who had come here to look things over a short time before with Editor Wilson. This man was J. B. Turner, active in Sarasota affairs for many years.

Turner rented the former "meeting house" building on the northwest corner of Main and Pineapple and established the general merchandising firm of Coarsey, Turner & Co. Soon afterward, S. H. Highsmith bought into the business and the firm name was changed to Highsmith & Turner. A year later, George B. Prime entered the firm and its name was changed again to Highsmith, Turner & Prime.

The three partners then expanded in a big way. They bought an abandoned store on the south side of Main, formerly occupied by Charles and Furman Whitaker, and two extra lots. For these lots—in the heart of the "town"—they had to pay all of \$50 each. The firm then began selling everything from diapers to caskets, including complete lines of groceries, hardware, feed and hay, plows, stoves, and what have you.

"We did a mighty good business but very little of it was for cash," says Prime. "One year we sold \$100,000 worth of goods without receiving a thousand dollars in cash over the counters. The principal mediums of exchange were alligator hides, cow hides, furs, sweet potatoes, chickens and produce of all kinds. We shipped all this stuff by boat to market and received what we could for it in cash.

"At that time, the fishing business was practically the only cash 'industry' in Sarasota. Mullet sold for five cents each, regardless of size, and the 'run boats' which carried them into Tampa issued receipts to the fishermen for each catch. These receipts were cashed by the merchants and collected from the wholesale fish dealers once a month."

Finding that trading was more profitable than merchandising, Prime sold his interest in the firm to E. F. Blakeley in 1902 and for the next seven years ran a schooner to Tampa and south to Key West. He then re-entered the retail business and owned a store until 1938.

An event of transcendent importance occurred in Sarasota in November, 1899. The village got a telephone! Two of them! One was installed in the postoffice, which had been moved to a small wooden building on the southwest corner of Main and Pineapple, erected by Harry L. Higel, and the other in Higel's office down on the wharf.

What a telephone! It hissed and hummed, and crackled and jangled. To hear someone calling from Manatee required ears as sharp as a village gossip's—and the deepest concentration. But imperfect as that first tele-

phone was, it was lauded throughout the Land of Sarasota as something wonderful! Now Sarasota could actually talk with the outside world!

The first call came over the telephone Thursday morning, November 9, 1899. Said the Times: "This morning a strange sound was heard in Sarasota. A. E. Stebbins, the real estate broker of Manatee, 'called up' the editor of the Times. Then Dr. J. C. Pelot sent the compliments of the season and gave congratulations upon the union by wire between Sarasota and the river town."

The Times added: "Harry L. Higel has been very active in this work and to him is due much of the credit of bringing about the completion of this enterprise, for which we extend congratulations."

The telephone line was built from Manatee to Sarasota by the Gulf Coast Telephone Co., a subsidiary of the Tampa and Manatee River Telegraph and Telephone Co. which in 1896 had constructed a line to Tampa. Pine trees were used principally for poles on which to stretch the single "grounded line" and the route zigzagged through the woods. Perhaps someone may be interested in knowing that the officials of the company were: Horatio G. Reed, president; L. R. Warren, vice-president; H. G. H. Reed, secretary, and O. L. Stuart, treasurer.

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#### A DRY TIME WAS HAD BY ONE AND ALL!

There was no tippling at this gathering—the first convention ever held in Sarasota, May 16, 1894. The reason: it was a convention of Baptists and all speakers orated about the deadliness of Demon Rum. The Inn was located on the present site of the Sarasota Hotel.

The telephone threw extra work upon the aging shoulders of Mrs. Carrie S. Abbe, postmistress of Sarasota from 1891 to 1922. When a call came through to anyone in town, she was expected to hurry through the sandy streets and bring the party to the phone. When that wasn't possible, she was expected to take the message and deliver it, even though she had to walk several miles. For all of which she received not a cent of extra pay—and often not even a "thank you."

A year later, the line was extended to Myakka and two more "subscribers" were added: C. L. Reaves, in Fruitville, and A. M. Wilson, at Myakka.

At the turn of the century, the best lots in Sarasota still were "dirt cheap." Editor Wilson, who sold—or tried to sell—real estate on the side, announced that he had five bayfront lots for sale at a rock-bottom price.

Said Editor Wilson: "These all together will be a splendid site for a summer and winter hotel, having 400 feet frontage on Sarasota Bay and being 170 feet deep, giving a view of Sarasota for six miles north and three miles west to the Gulf of Mexico. The land is scrub oak hammock, the best soil for growing oranges and pineapples, and is now covered with dense native growth. Price for whole 400 by 170 feet, \$1,000. Or can be divided into lots of 80 by 170 feet for \$200 each, cash." These lots were just a quarter-mile south of Main Street.

Harry L. Higel also entered the real estate business early in 1900, becoming sales agent for the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co. He announced he had for sale town lots, orange groves, and hammock, saw grass and pine lands.

Several new business men appeared on the Sarasota scene in 1900. George W. Blackburn announced on May 24 that he had opened a store "stocked with a large supply of hardware and fishermen's and hunters' supplies." Also, that he had a first class blacksmith shop and would build to order all kinds of wagons. His store was built on the southeast corner of Main and Palm.

An infant exporting business was trying to get started in 1900. The owners were Eli Veruki and Andrew X. Alexaky. They specialized in sun-dried fish roe which they sold in European markets under the trade name "Gotzago." They had a two-story fish house on a pier extending out into the bay near Cedar Point—now Sunset Point. The concern operated a few years and then closed its doors—for reasons no one knew. Sarasota-made Gotzago ceased to be.

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Lists of names are deadly reading—except to those whose names are listed, and their friends, and their descendants. But for the sake of the

record we must give here the names of all the people known to be living in the present Sarasota County in 1897, as shown by a directory carefully preserved by Mrs. Guy Shepard. Those citizens of nearly a half century ago were:

Sarasota: Carrie S. Abbe, Perry and W. R. Berry, T. F. Blair, George Bloomer, T. Broadway, Hugh Browning, W. P. Bryan, George A. Cason, N. W. Cassady, Robert Conyer, S. C. Corwin, Peter Crocker, John Dennis, W. J. and E. B. Drumwright, John Ferguson, J. Hamilton Gillespie, W. R. Gocio, E. B. Grantham, Frank Guptill, G. W. Hayden, John and Furman H. Helveston, Frank and Harry L. Higel, L. D. and W. A. Hodges, D. R. Jameson, Walter, A. P. and J. C. Jones, George Johnson, E. R. Levesey, John Liddell, G. C. and P. H. Mann, George H. Matheny, B. Molfus, J. Nelson, Elof Peterson, Frank Pinard, W. E. Poole, Louis Roberts, C. M. Robinson, William Shoales, R. B. Smallwood, J. N. Smith, C. A. St. Armand, H. O. Stancliffe, Henry Stotz, Benjamin Stickney, William Sweden, A. J. Tatum, H. M. Trapwell, J. L. Vincent, Hamlin Whitaker, Luke Wood, C. N. Thompson, and E. Woolley. Six colored persons also were listed: J. Coleman, Lewis Colson, E. Justice, John Mays, and I. P. and W. S. Washington. NOTE: More than three-fourths of the above persons lived outside the town limits of Sarasota but received their mail at the Sarasota post office.

Fruitville: Aaron and J. M. Bates, Thomas Bryan, H. F., J. A., Walter and W. H. Hand, Bailey Molphus, D. F. Pate, R. J. Platt, Hilton Rawls, C. L. and H. E. Reaves, G. J., John, Riley, and W. H. Tatum, James Thomas, E. B. and F. H. Tucker, J. C. and P. A. Walker.

Myakka: A. H., B. J., George W., and James C. Albritton, Aaron Bryant, M. P. Carlton, John Coker, A. J. Cook, Capt. J. Crowley, W. A. Durrance, D. U. Earnest, W. H. Edwards, E. A. and J. J. Ferguson, J. N. Hall, J. S., S., and W. F. Hancock, W. N. Hayes, N. J. High, Joseph Howell, W. Johnson, James F. Keen, C. F. McCall, I. S. Peacock, W. P. Pelot, F. D. and W. A. L. Rawls, G. W. Routh, James Scott, George and S. E. Stephens, George Tatum, Oscar Tollin, Dr. A. O., J. A., and O. I. Webb, Alvin Willis, A. M., Ben F., and E. D. Wilson, J. H. and D. C. Wingate, and John R. Yeomans.

Osprey: Dr. J. H. Bissell, George W. and Capt. Frank Blackburn, A., P. H., and W. W. Brown, J. B. and K. D. Cowart, R. S. Griffith, E. F. Helm, E. R. Marsh, H. Schmidt, H. and H. W. Surgenier, and John G. and William W. Webb.

Venice: W. E. Crequitt, C. O. and Claude T. Curry, A. B. Edwards, George, Ralph, Wesley and Eugene Higel, H. J. Kennedy, Rev. Jesse, F. R., J. J., and L. J. Knight, C. L. and Rev. William Lowe, L. Oliver, W. E. Stephens, and A. F. Wrede.

A time-obliterated community was listed in the directory—Hayden, “three miles south of Sarasota on the bay.” Those living there were: T. F. Hamlin, E. T. Hevlem, W. M. Lambert, Henry Schupp, and S. F. Silas. Hayden was founded by Dr. George Hayden, a traveling dentist, who came from Palmetto.

The directory also gave the inhabitants of Englewood, described as “a newly settled section whose products are mostly fish.” In 1897, the Englewood fishermen were selling their fish at Punta Gorda. The residents of that section were: J. C., J. D., M. L., and Lee Anderson, C. M. Biorseth, C. W. Caroway, G. W. Chapman, S. W. Chaysman, A. L. Crockford, Frank Doyle, T. L. Dryman, L. E. Dunn, George D. Farr, D. W. Gallup, T. C., George L., and Thomas Hamilton, B. C. and W. F. Heacock, N. W. Hopkins, L. C. John, E. F. and W. F. Jones, G. W. Jonas, R. Jonvarkeff, H. S. Kelley, Schuyler Kelley, W. P. Kinsey, J. C. Leach, D. A. McNab, J. A. Mathern, J. Mathew, C. W. Mitchell, L. C. Money, John F. Morse, Charles H. Murphy, H. N., H. S., and Ira Nichols, Henry Oberg, D. N. and James S. Parker, A. Politorsky, U. S. Powell, W. B. Pyse, George Quimby, H. Stelzman, Joseph Tarrant, H. and J. E. Walker, Samuel Washburn and Elias Wyatt. Thirty-six of the above fifty-two persons were fishermen.

## CHAPTER 8

### THE SEABOARD ALMOST STARTS A BOOM

A BIG, BURLY MAN, hard-muscled and dour-faced, drove up to the De Soto Hotel one December day in 1899 in a horse and buggy. With him was a dainty little lady, as delicate as he was husky and as pretty as he was—well, let's say unhandsome.

They were Mr. and Mrs. Ralph C. Caples, visiting Sarasota on a delayed honeymoon trip to the Florida West Coast. They had come to Bradenton by steamer from Tampa and had set out to explore the Sarasota Bay region. The 12-mile trip here from Bradenton over the sandy trails had taken four hours.

Caples tied his horse to a hitching post and looked at the drab, unpainted buildings in the "business section" and the weeds growing in the street.

"Not much of a place, is it, darling," he said to his wife. "Do you think we have wasted our time coming here?"

"No, indeed, Ralph!" Mrs. Caples answered emphatically. "Just look at that view across the bay. I never saw anything more beautiful. Some day this village is going to amount to something—I'm sure of it! Let's stay here a few days."

Carefully, affectionately, Caples lifted his wife from the buggy and hand in hand they walked up the wooden steps of the hotel, into the lobby, and registered. But instead of remaining just a few days, they stayed a week. And the longer they lingered, the more they liked the little village and its people.

That honeymoon trip of the Caples to Sarasota would be unimportant perhaps if Caples had not been one of the country's most up-and-coming railroad men; a young fellow still in his twenties but a man who had scores of friends of wealth and influence, not because he had been born to riches but because he had a vibrant personality. Also, because he had ideas. Good ideas which were practical.

Because of those ideas, Caples had risen from a yard clerk's job on the Lake Erie & Western Railroad in his home town of Fostoria, Ohio, to become city passenger agent of the Delaware, Lackawana and Western Railroad in New York City before he was 28 years old.

While in Sarasota, in 1899, Caples had another idea. Why couldn't a railroad be built to the Land of Sarasota from Tampa, giving this fertile

region access to the markets of the north? Surely, a railroad was vitally needed—and why wouldn't it be profitable?

The more Caples thought about the idea, the more certain he became that such a railroad would be a sound venture. He became so enthused that he and his wife packed their bags and returned to Tampa, to get financial backing. One of the men he interested was T. C. Taliaferro, president of the First National Bank of Tampa, and one of the leading bankers of the south. Other prominent men agreed to help finance the project.

Before Caples went back north, the Florida West Coast Railroad Co. was formed with Taliaferro as president and Caples as vice-president and general manager. George Dempster was employed as chief engineer and he was instructed to make the topographical surveys needed in railroad construction. Other men were employed to secure the land required for the right of way.

Everyone connected with the proposed railroad was warned to keep the project secret—but somehow or other, officials of the Seaboard Airline Railroad learned what was going on, and just a few weeks before Caples' outfit was ready to start laying tracks, the Seaboard swung into action, and began extending its tracks southward from Turkey Creek. As a result, the company Caples promoted passed out of existence.

Caples was chagrined and more than a little disappointed. He had spent nearly five thousand dollars of his own money in the undertaking, and in those days, five thousand dollars was a lot of money, particularly to a young fellow like Caples. But instead of grouching, he went to the railway-coach-office of J. M. Barr, Seaboard vice-president, dumped his surveys and plans on Barr's desk, and wished him good luck. The two men later became close friends.

Years afterward, Seaboard officials laughingly declared that Caples' "wild eyed scheme" to build a railroad to Sarasota had caused them to build a railroad of their own at least five years sooner than they had planned.

In all events, the railroad Sarasota long had hoped for finally became a reality and the almost-dead village on Sarasota Bay began to come to life again. To be more exact, the railroad changed Sarasota from a "dream town" which existed almost entirely on a town plat into an actuality—a town which became legally incorporated. Because of the Seaboard, Sarasota got the start which enabled it to become the city it is today.

To keep the record straight, that first railroad perhaps should not be referred to as the "Seaboard." It always has been known as the Seaboard, true enough, but the official title of the road which came here was the

United States & West Indies Railroad & Steamship Co. With a name like that, how could the railroad help but be a success!

In case you're interested, the incorporators of the U. S. & W. I. R. R. & S. S. Co. were J. L. Young, M. E. Moody, W. L. Lowry and D. C. Thompson, of Plant City, and A. Schneider, of New York City. The company was capitalized for \$1,000,000. In reality, however, this railroad with the fancy name was a subsidiary of the Seaboard, even after its name was changed to the Florida West Shore Railway on May 9, 1903. It was absorbed into the Seaboard system years later.

Land needed for a right of way to the northern edge of Sarasota was granted by the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co. on August 7, 1902, and through the town on October 31, 1902. Two Main Street lots needed by the railroad were presented to it as a gift by Elijah B. and Fannie Crocker Grantham November 3, 1902. On one of these lots, the present Seaboard passenger depot stands.

The Seaboard—let's call it that to avoid complexities—reached Manatee early in December, 1902, and the first train puffed into that town on December 12. It was greeted by a crowd of more than 1,000 persons, the largest which had ever gathered in Manatee County for any event. During the next three months, the tracks were extended to Sarasota by Charles H. Davis, the contractor. The first train, consisting of a day coach, a Pullman, a baggage car and the engine, arrived here at 8 p.m., March 22, 1903. The engine was an old wood-burner, No. 52. The conductor was C. L. Morrow; the engineer, James "Red" Nichols, and the fireman, S. Tilden Davis, who later became chief of police in Sarasota.

The railroad tracks were extended through the town and west on Strawberry Avenue to a dock built out to eight feet of water. Several fish warehouses soon were erected on the dock.

The railroad's first freight and passenger depot, a small wooden building "up in the woods" at Seventh and Lemon, was opened by Hamden S. Smith, sent here by the Seaboard from Anthony, Fla., where he had been the railroad's general agent.

"There was no office furniture in the depot when I got there," Smith relates. "Only a telegraph table built in the bay window with instruments installed thereon. I borrowed a nail keg from the carpenters for an office chair and, at Futches Store on Main, I got a bacon box to use for a desk until the office furniture arrived, several days later.

"Around the new depot was a pine thicket. I had to cut a road through the trees to get a team up to the freight depot doors. I had brought a kerosene lamp and some railroad blankets with me, so I set up shop as Sarasota's first agent and telegraph operator. I had the freight and pas-

senger business to care for besides the express and telegraphing, and also the U. S. mail to get from and deliver to the post office, on my back."

### *Sarasota Becomes a Town*

When the first Seaboard train chugged into Sarasota, no brass band was on hand to blare forth a welcome. There wasn't even a crowd waiting at the depot—not enough people lived in Sarasota then to make a good-sized gathering, to say nothing of a crowd.

"Perhaps fifty people saw the first train arrive," estimates Mrs. C. V. S. Wilson. "But what we lacked in numbers, we made up for in spirit. We all were tremendously pleased that Sarasota at last had gotten a real railroad and everyone was convinced that the future growth of the community was assured."

Growth of the tiny village was not long in coming. In fact, Sarasota began to spring to life in the fall of 1902 when it was learned definitely that the Seaboard intended to extend its tracks to Sarasota instead of stopping at the Manatee River. Real estate began to sell again—more sales were made during the following year than during the entire preceding decade. In one month, six new houses were started! And two new business places were opened! Sure enough, Sarasota was going places!

So enthused were the Sarasotans regarding the prospects for the future that they decided the village must be incorporated as a town. A mass meeting was called. It was held Tuesday night, October 14, 1902, in Harry L. Higel's office on the wharf. Practically every qualified voter in the village attended—53 of them.

"Sarasota now is at the cross-roads," orated Higel. "The time has come when we must decide whether we should let Sarasota lag along, doing nothing to advance its progress, or whether we should band together, incorporate as a town, and then fight for improvements we need so badly!"

Gillespie chimed in with his Scottish burr. "Ay, we hae lingered a' too long already. If we luve this place o' ours, we must incorrrrrrpurate!"

Higel and Gillespie were loudly cheered. The issue was never in doubt. The vote to incorporate was unanimous. Then the first town officials were elected: John Hamilton Gillespie, mayor; J. B. Turner, Dr. J. O. Brown, George W. Blackburn, W. J. Hill and Harry L. Higel, aldermen; B. D. Gullett, clerk, and T. F. Blair, marshal.

Long after midnight the mass meeting broke up—and the village of Sarasota had been made a town!

The incorporation, made in accordance with the general laws of the state, was recorded November 14, 1902, in Manatee County records. The incorporation papers show the town's seal, crudely drawn, as "a mullet

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#### SARASOTA AS IT LOOKED IN 1887

The famous old De Soto Hotel, later called the Belle Haven Inn, is shown above. Lower Main Street, as it looked from the top of the DeSoto, is shown below. The building at the head of the street was the Sarasota House, located where the Palmer National Bank building now stands. The street was unpaved but it boasted of a wooden sidewalk on the north side.

with a rising sun over palmettoes with shells at the base." The town's motto was: "May Sarasota Prosper."

Before the incorporation was recorded, the newly-chosen town officials held their first meeting, in Gillespie's home, Tuesday night, October 20, and Dr. Brown was elected president of the council.

During the following two weeks, Gillespie—the town's lone attorney—drafted the first ordinances covering the duties of the various officials and also providing penalties for public health and public safety offenses. Laws covering taxation also were included. It's reported, but not confirmed, that the original ordinances were copied from those of Lakeland. Anyhow, they were approved by council November 27th. They were then advertised in the Sarasota Times during December and went into effect January 1, 1903.

Sarasota's first gain from incorporation was a calaboose, erected during November on the north side of Cedar Point. To build and equip it, Mayor Gillespie advanced \$200. But before he paid out the money he secured a note—canny Scotsman that he was—from the council members for the entire amount, and made sure the loan would pay eight per cent interest. The calaboose was built by W. F. Rigby and ready for its first "guests" December 14. The building cost \$105—the rest of the money went for equipment. Just what that equipment was, town records do not say.

While the town fathers were busily engaged on official matters, Sarasota's "de luxe" hotel, the De Soto, changed hands and in the process acquired a new name. The Tampa syndicate which had bought it early in 1899 sold it to the Southern Investment Co., a Virginia corporation, on October 6, 1902, at a profit of \$3,000. The new owners changed the hotel's name to the Belle Haven Inn—perhaps they had no liking for the Spanish conquistador after whom the hotel had been originally named.

Under new management, the hotel re-opened for another winter season—one which proved to be the best in its history—on Wednesday, December 10.

On that same day, the town council gave orders to Marshall Blair to make the first public improvement in Sarasota—repair a bridge across a slough near Cason's store at the foot of Main Street. This bridge, erected years before by volunteers, had rotted and the town fathers agreed it must be reconstructed before someone fell through it.

The bridge job was completed in three weeks and when the marshall presented his bill, the councilmen declared it was outrageously high. All of \$7.99! Practically eight whole dollars to rebuild one bridge! Highway robbery! Payment of the bill was approved only after long argument.

The Sarasota Ice, Fish and Power Co. won the distinction on December 12, 1902, of becoming the first concern in town to be given a permit to erect a plant. It was authorized to make ice, generate electricity for lights and power, and handle fish. The concern immediately erected a building at Fifth and Lemon and installed a ten-ton York ice-making machine. Now Sarasotans could have refrigeration—and ice cream. The first directors of the company were J. L. Wilhelm, W. C. Hayman, Frank C. Armstrong, S. D. Futch, J. W. Wilhelm and S. D. McKean.

Rosemary Cemetery became town property on February 11, 1903. Previously, it had been owned by the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co. and burials could be made there only with the company's permission. Now, with Sarasota incorporated, Gillespie deeded it to the town as a company gift. Council ordered it surveyed by Col. E. W. Morrill, the work to cost \$35.

The first purchaser of a lot in Rosemary from the town was L. H. Cunliff who bought a burial place on May 22, 1903, for \$15. Seven years later Cunliff appeared before council and declared he had been cheated. He said he had been given a lot priced at only \$10. To appease him, council suggested that he buy the lot adjoining—and \$5 would be knocked off the price. Cunliff agreed and thereby became the owner of two lots which cost him, altogether, \$20.

Marshall Blair was the first town employe to quit his job. He told council March 10, 1903, he no longer could afford to work at "starvation wages." He had been getting \$10 a month for serving as marshall and sanitation inspector. In addition, he received \$1 for each arrest and 2½ per cent of all license money collected. But arrests were few and far between and council had not yet fixed license fees—so he couldn't collect them.

Blair also was supposed to be paid \$3 a month for taking care of the street lights—but the lights hadn't been bought. In February, Blair had made only \$14—his salary of \$10 and \$1 each for four arrests. The councilmen reluctantly admitted \$14 a month wasn't quite enough to live on but they said the town couldn't afford to pay higher wages, so Blair's resignation was accepted. D. S. McRae was appointed to succeed him.

The council had the best of reasons for rejecting Blair's plea for a wage boost. The town wasn't getting any revenue from which salaries could be paid!

When the town was incorporated, and officials elected, the councilmen believed they would be able to charge license fees to everyone engaged in business and they tentatively fixed a schedule of fees. But a hitch developed. Mayor Gillespie decided that collection of fees might be illegal, due to the

fact that the town had been incorporated only under the state's general law and not by specific act of the state legislature. He advised delay.

The bugaboo of legality finally was eliminated on April 30, 1903, when Gov. William Sherman Jennings signed a statute which validated all acts and deeds done by the town officials up to that time and authorized them to continue in office until the next election. From that date on, Sarasota really was a town—without any doubt!

The councilmen then sat down and began re-drafting the license fee schedule, to make sure too many enemies would not be made among people called upon to foot the bill.

While they were debating this momentous issue, Theodore W. Redd beat the gun and appeared at council meeting April 6, 1903, and planked down \$6.50 as a fee for his livery stable. He said it was about time the town got some money in its treasury.

Perhaps as a reward for his generosity, the council straightway awarded him the contract for the first street improvement program in Sarasota—the grading of Main Street from Five Points to the bay. For this work, he was paid \$35. But when the job was finished, the town still was broke. So Redd had to accept town scrip instead of cash. The scrip wasn't redeemed until six months later.

Money or no money, the council decided on April 14, 1903—three weeks after the first train came snorting into town—that the time had come when Sarasota should have light. Street lights! So council went on a spending spree and ordered three kerosene street lamps costing \$3.75 each from Knight & Wall Co., of Tampa. When they were received several weeks later, one was placed at the watering trough at Five Points, another at the foot of Main Street, and the third at the railroad depot.

Council was spurred into taking this extravagant move by the women of Sarasota who began to demand in no uncertain terms that public improvements be started on a scale in keeping with an up-and-coming town. They were tired of walking along unlighted streets—and they had had enough of wading through sand above their shoetops. After getting the lights, they insisted upon better sidewalks, and better streets.

Harkening to the shrill demands of the women, the councilmen got busy. They awarded C. L. Reaves a contract for "hard surfacing" Main Street with marl, the expense to be borne by abutting property owners. The councilmen also preemptorily ordered merchants on the south side of Main street, between Five Points and Palm Avenue, to build a 7½-foot sidewalk at their own expense. Going a step farther, they ordered merchants and property owners on the north side of Main to rebuild the sidewalk which had been built years before. In many places, this old side-

walk had rotted away—so, in reality, council ordered sidewalks for both sides of the street.

The women were not yet satisfied. They demanded still more progress. They particularly wanted sidewalks at the Methodist Church, then located on the southeast corner of Main and Pineapple. But the councilmen dilly-dallied. They said they had no funds to undertake such a major improvement.

Irked exceedingly, the women asked permission to lay the walks themselves. Of course the permission was granted. Before the work was started, the women pleaded with the townsmen for financial assistance. But the men scoffed, saying Sarasota had gotten along fine without sidewalks for years, so why hurry? The women were momentarily stymied—but not for long.

Digging deep into their savings, they raised enough money to buy the lumber needed for the sidewalks. It was unloaded near the church. The women then proceeded to start laying the walks themselves. That did the trick. When the men saw them struggling with the heavy planks, they shame-facedly took over the job. The women then stood by and bossed. And perhaps snickered.

The success in the sidewalk-building undertaking encouraged the women to demand more and more in the way of public improvements. To give their demands more weight, they organized the Town Improvement Society at a meeting held in the home of Mrs. Ebenezer Thompson. The first members included Mrs. R. P. McDaniel, Mrs. Carrie S. Abbe, Mrs. Herbert S. Stackhouse, Mrs. Hattie Hebb, Miss Sarah Young, Mrs. C. V. S. Wilson and Mrs. F. W. Schultz. The membership list grew rapidly and during the years which followed the society worked untiringly in the interests of Sarasota.

After the town had been given a taste of public improvements, it began wanting more and more. Citizens insisted upon having old bridges repaired, quagmires filled, more streets and sidewalks built, and a town beautification program started.

To get enough money to start just a few of these improvements, council finally passed on September 10, 1903, the license fee ordinance—and set the fees which had to be paid by everyone engaged in business or a profession. A complete list of everyone subject to the tax was spread upon the clerk's minutes. It is interesting because it shows who was what in the fall of 1903.

The following firms and individuals were listed: merchants—Highsmith, Turner & Co., T. J. Dancey, E. B. Grantham, George A. Cason, George W. Blackburn, McKean & Co., James Flood, R. B. Chadwick, Pelot & Albritton, Joe Hansen, Veruki Fish Co., Sarasota Fish Co., L. C.

Cox, Sarasota Drug Co., Sarasota Ice Plant, and Sarasota Ice, Fish & Power Co.; dentist—Dr. R. P. Noble; physicians—Dr. J. O. Brown and Dr. A. B. Cannon; livery stables—H. V. Whitaker and Turner & Foy; real estate agents—C. V. S. Wilson, and Sarasota Realty Agency; attorneys—J. Hamilton Gillespie and J. H. Lord; insurance agent—R. P. McDaniel; Southern Express Co.; hotels—Belle Haven Inn, Sarasota House, and Broadway House; eating houses—A. A. Bryant, and Mrs. Carrie S. Abbe. The fees ranged from \$1.50 to \$12.50 a year.

Imposition of these fees, the first taxes of any kind ever levied by the town, was delayed for months pending a very necessary move by the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co., Ltd., the British concern which founded Sarasota and owned most of the property in the town.

At the time Sarasota was incorporated, the British company still held title to all the streets, avenues, alleys and roads. Gillespie, the company representative, promised that these thoroughfares would be deeded over to the town promptly. But all the necessary papers were not signed until August 5, 1903. This essential deed was signed by Gillespie as attorney-in-fact for the company, witnessed by Carrie S. Abbe and H. N. Trapnell, and notarized by C. V. S. Wilson.

After this deed was recorded, councilmen breathed easier. Now, when they authorized street improvements, they knew that the town's own property was being improved—not that of a British concern.

Parenthetically, it might be mentioned here that the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co., Ltd., never gave anything to Sarasota—its child—except Rosemary Cemetery and the thoroughfares. It owned approximately 50,000 acres in the vicinity of the town—huge tracts for which it paid approximately \$1 an acre. But the company did not give one acre of that land, cheap as it was, to Sarasota for park purposes—or for any other purpose. This despite the fact that the company had promised the Scotch colonists that it would provide "a big park in the center of the town." The promise never was kept.

The penuriousness of the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co., Ltd., resulted in a most unusual anomaly. For five years after the town was incorporated, no taxes were levied on real and personal property! And this despite the fact that the town ordinances, approved by the state legislature, gave council the right to levy taxes up to ten mills for public purposes.

The explanation for this strange state of affairs is quite simple. The British concern still owned most of the land in the town and held title to many of the buildings. Had taxes been levied, the company would have had to pay out money in sizeable sums to pay for public improvements. That would never, never do! The Britishers stood to profit most

by the rapid development of the community—but they didn't want to pay the fiddler!

Gillespie, the company representative, had great influence in the town, not only because of his personality but also because he was, in effect, the town landlord. What he said—went! And heaven help those who opposed him! So when Gillespie obeyed orders from Scotland and frowned on taxes, no taxes were levied!

Gillespie didn't succeed in squelching all opposition. Harry L. Higel—a Sarasota booster throughout his lifetime—insisted in council meetings time and again that the no-taxation policy would result inevitably in town stagnation. He argued that if Sarasota expected to grow, it must pay for things which would make growth possible. But Gillespie was mayor and controlled a majority of votes in council—so Higel got nowhere. Not just then.

For a time it looked as though Gillespie was right and Higel was wrong. From 1902 to 1906, the town spurted ahead. There were reasons—and J. H. Lord was one of them!

### *Lord Comes to Sarasota*

Joseph H. Lord was a greedy man. Not greedy for food nor greedy for wealth. But greedy for land. Particularly, land in the Sarasota Bay region. He never could get enough of it.

A strange fellow, this man Lord; remarkable in many ways. A native of Maine, he studied to be an attorney at Brown University, in Providence, R. I. His family was well to do and his wife, the former Miss Franc Webber, came from a wealthy family. He also had many wealthy friends.

He had a magnetic personality and was a fluent orator. When he pulled out all the stops and really let go, his orations were worth coming miles to hear. He commanded respect, partly because of his broad knowledge and partly because of his magnificent physique. Square-shouldered, he stood six feet five in his stocking feet and weighed more than 220 pounds.

Lord came to Florida in the late Eighties to buy phosphate lands for himself and his wealthy New England associates. For a while he lived at Orlando. Looking for a location where land with phosphate possibilities might be bought cheap, he first visited the Land of Sarasota in the winter of 1890-91. The Venice area attracted him and on March 19, 1891, he and his wife's father, Frank R. Webber, purchased 1,394 acres from Mr. and Mrs. Henry S. Kedney for \$1,000.

During the next eleven years, Lord spent most of his time in the Venice region. He planted several citrus groves and began experimenting

with various types of crops. His love for this section of Florida increased steadily—and, as it increased, Lord began buying more and more land.

When the Seaboard entered Sarasota, Lord became convinced that the then insignificant village was a community with a future. So to Sarasota he came, in the spring of 1903. Then, with shrewd foresight, he began buying the best business sites in town.

One of his first purchases was the Sarasota House, on the northwest corner of Main and Central. He knew that Mrs. Rosie Vincent, the owner, had purchased it four years before for \$500 but when she held out for \$3,000, he paid it. He realized he was paying a stiff price but was certain time would prove the wisdom of his decision. Today the corner is worth—well, just go ask the Palmer Corporation!

With the deal closed on the Sarasota House, Lord began buying lots all along Main Street, paying \$50 for some, \$100 for others, and even more for lots which particularly struck his fancy. He also bought lots on Pineapple, and Central—in fact, here, there and everywhere.

Within a year he had acquired title to four of the five corners at Five Points. For the Methodist Church site, on the southeast corner of Main and Pineapple, he paid \$1,600 and threw in another lot for good measure. He also bought the "triangle", bounded by Central, Pineapple and Seventh Street for \$800. And the northwest corner of Main and Pineapple for \$1500. For all four corners, he paid a grand total of exactly \$6,900!

The acquisition of these choice spots merely whetted Lord's appetite for Sarasota land. Not only in the town but in the back country. Ultimately, his holdings included at least 200 town lots and approximately 70,000 acres up and down the coast and far inland. A part interest in many of the holdings was held by New England associates of Lord—but he controlled the property.

The Lord purchases stimulated Sarasota even more than did the coming of the railroad. For most of the land he paid cash—spot cash, and more money circulated in Sarasota than at any time in its history. The town was confident that now it was on the map—to stay.

### *Sarasota spurts — Then Lags*

Playing a hunch, W. U. Lathrop drove down to Sarasota in a horse and buggy from Bradenton on Tuesday, February 10, 1903, to talk telephones with the town council.

Lathrop was the superintendent of the Manatee district of the Peninsular Telephone Co., then just getting well organized, and he thought there was a remote possibility that someday his concern might profit by providing telephone service for Sarasota—now that the town was getting a railroad.

Tying his horse to a hitching post at the Sarasota House, Lathrop stood a few minutes watching cows drinking at the watering trough at Five Points. He looked at the drab, unpainted buildings on Main Street and noticed that the one sidewalk in the "business section" was rotted and falling apart.

"What a town!" muttered Lathrop to himself. "If it ever amounts to anything it'll be a miracle. Why, in heaven's name, did I ever come here anyhow?"

For a few minutes, Lathrop pondered the question of whether he hadn't better forget Sarasota and go back to Bradenton. But finally he decided to stay—why waste a trip?

That night he appeared before the council and presented his proposition. A telephone exchange would be established here, he said, if the company would be granted a 30-year franchise. And the exchange would be opened within a year.

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#### A BUSY DAY AT FIVE POINTS IN 1905

Many Sarasotans got their drinking water in the old days at the Five Points Fountain, shown at extreme left. The buildings in the background, "on the triangle", were built by J. H. Lord.

The councilmen leaped at the offer. A regular telephone exchange, with telephones all over town—without having to pay a dime of the town's meager funds! Almost too good to be true! Now the town wouldn't be dependent entirely on the two grounded-wire phones, which hissed and hummed, in Carrie Abbe's post office and in Higel's office! In less than an hour, Lathrop had the franchise he sought.

Lathrop's company was not able to make good on his promise to start service within a year. Delays were encountered in getting materials. But early in August a little 50-line magneto switchboard was installed in the tiny wooden building which housed the post office. Mrs. Abbe was made the local manager and she employed Miss Mamie Woodruff as the first operator.

On August 10, 1903, the exchange went into operation and the company had 48 Sarasota subscribers, instead of a hoped-for 25.

More good breaks were in store for Sarasota. In the following month, the U. S. dredge Suwannee finally completed a channel through Little Sarasota Bay to Venice, cutting through the last bars and shoals on which boats had become stranded at low tide for many years. The channel was only three feet deep in places and very narrow but it was infinitely better than no channel at all.

With the completion of this channel, a steadily increasing number of launches were put into use up and down the coast. One of the first was owned by Harry Higel. Soon there were scores. And now, for the first time, freight boats could ply up and down Little Sarasota Bay on regular schedules. The dredging cost the federal government approximately \$50,000 but it was worth ten times that amount to the Land of Sarasota.

During the winter of 1903-04, Sarasota grew so fast that its miniature two-room school on Eighth Street became badly overcrowded. Parents began demanding better accommodations for their children. An appeal was made to the Manatee County school board to take prompt action. The Sarasotans said at least \$3500 would be needed to build the school required.

The board members cogitated and then decreed they could not afford to spend more than \$2,000. But they agreed to erect the kind of building wanted if the Sarasotans would pay the extra \$1500 and also provide the lot. Subscription lists were circulated and in less than a week, the necessary amount was pledged—the required \$1500 plus \$400 more for paying for a lot, clearing the land and enclosing it with a fence.

The school, located on Main Street east of Pine Street, was built during the summer of 1904. It was a two-story building with four class rooms on the first floor and one class-room and an unceiled auditorium on the second. It was opened September 19, 1904, with an enroll-

ment of 124 pupils. Three teachers were employed at first and a fourth was added to the staff after Christmas.

On Thanksgiving Day, in 1904, a physician arrived in Sarasota—a man who was destined to play a prominent part in the community's affairs for many years thereafter. He was Dr. Jack Halton, "the singing doctor," an Englishman by birth, who was then practicing in Muncie, Ind. Dr. Halton came to Florida to escape the bleak northern winters—and while looking for the best place to locate, came to Sarasota. He liked the town—and the people. So he returned north, got his family, and came back south soon after Christmas.

Later, Dr. Jack Halton established the Halton Sanitarium on Gulf Stream Avenue, the first institution of its kind in this section.

It was Dr. Halton who first denounced the outdoor privies and inadequate cesspools in the business district. Appearing before council soon after he opened his first office here, he asserted that the town's lack of sewers was a disgrace to the community. To emphasize his point, he said the stench from the cesspool at the Belle Haven Inn, the town's deluxe hotel, was so nauseating he had been unable to finish eating a meal in the hotel's dining room.

As a result of the doctor's one-man campaign, council ordered the manager of the Belle Haven to install adequate cesspools or close up the place. That was as far as council would go. It wasn't ready yet to shoulder the responsibility of levying taxes so a sewerage system could be built and paid for—or even put the issue before the people. Another depression was needed to convince the town that sewers were a necessity and not a luxury.

The first sewer in town was built by J. H. Lord after people began complaining about the stench from the cesspool at the Sarasota House, which Lord owned. Six-inch pipes were laid in the alley just north of Main street from the hotel out into the bay. Merchants on the north side of Main were permitted to tap into the sewer by paying a small rental fee.

1905 was a bright year for Sarasota. During that year, the town got its first real golf course, its first bank, its first "modern" business building, and its first really good artesian well.

Practically all these "firsts" resulted from a sudden burst of activity by J. Hamilton Gillespie, inspired perhaps by the fact that he had just married attractive Miss Blanche McDaniel.

The doughty Scotsman decided, early in 1905, that Sarasota had become large enough and thriving enough to have a bank of its own. So he went to Tampa and talked with T. C. Taliaferro, president of the First National Bank of Tampa. Gillespie painted a glowing picture of Sarasota—so glowing that Taliaferro agreed to use his influence to open a branch

bank in Gillespie's domain—not a branch of the Tampa bank but a branch of the First National Bank of Manatee, which Taliaferro also headed.

The Tampa banker declared, however, that the branch wouldn't be opened until a building suitable for a bank was erected in Sarasota. Gillespie promised that such a building would be completed by fall. He kept his word. A two-story concrete block structure was erected that summer on the southwest corner of Main and Pineapple. And in the corner room of that building, the branch bank was opened in October, with O. L. Stewart as its first cashier. Stewart was soon succeeded by C. E. Hitchings who remained with the bank for many years thereafter.

The bank building, now known as the Badger Pharmacy building, was built on the spot where a small wooden building had been erected by Harry L. Higel for the postoffice and telephone exchange. While construction work was in progress, the wooden building was moved out into Main Street. And there it remained for months. No one complained that it interfered with traffic—in those days, Sarasota had never heard of traffic jams.

The concrete blocks used in the building were made by J. Louis Houle, who was induced to come here from St. Petersburg by Gillespie. Houle set up his plant on Sixth Street near Lemon. To obtain the water needed in mixing the concrete, Houle drilled an eight-inch artesian well, 490 feet deep. A vein of fine water was hit. Later, the well was purchased by Sarasota as a source of municipal water.

Houle remained in Sarasota many years. And the blocks he manufactured were used in building the Halton Sanitarium, operated by Dr. Jack Halton, and many residences and stores. Practically all the buildings are still standing and their cement block walls seem as good as new, providing convincing proof that Houle sold a good product.

Incidentally, the telephone exchange and post office were not forced to leave Main and Pineapple by the construction of the bank building. The exchange was moved into the second floor of the new structure and the post office into a room fronting on Pineapple.

Not satisfied with getting a bank for Sarasota, Gillespie went ahead during the summer of 1905 and provided the town with its first nine-hole golf course, laid out on a 110-acre tract of land just south and southeast of the present courthouse. He also built a clubhouse.

The course was the personal property of Gillespie and he maintained it at his own expense for five years, when it was taken over by Owen Burns. The Gillespie course wasn't the finest in the state by any means, old timers say, but it was good enough to lure a few golfers to Sarasota. But not many. The course never was overcrowded.

The crest of Sarasota's brief wave of prosperity passed in 1905. During the following year, real estate sales fell off and building slumped. The pump-priming provided by the coming of the Seaboard and Lord's land purchases during 1903 and 1904 failed to give the town sufficient impetus to maintain a steady growth. In fact, the town began slipping backward. Once more, Sarasota experienced bad times—and they were accentuated by the nation-wide financial depression of 1907.

Strange as it may seem, however, the bad times of 1907 and 1908 proved to be a godsend to Sarasota. They served to convince the people of Sarasota that the Lord helps those who help themselves—that if they wanted to have a real city, it was about time for them to begin laying the foundation stones on which a city could be built.

When the Sarasotans began taking stock of the community assets, they did not find much to brag about. True enough, the town now had a railroad, a few more business houses, a golf course of sorts, a fair-to-middling school, and a few hundred more residents.

But, in general, the town was not much better than it had been in 1902, before the railroad came. A narrow strip of marl had been laid in the center of Main Street in 1903 but most of the marl had been washed away by rains, and now the street looked even worse than it had before. The other streets were nothing but sandy trails.

The town had no water system—the people still had to depend on cisterns or shallow wells. There were no sewers. No electricity; no gas; no street lights except the three kerosene lamps bought in 1903. Hogs still wallowed in the streets and cattle roamed everywhere, destroying shrubbery and lawns.

Repeated efforts were made to induce council to pass an ordinance to prohibit livestock owners from allowing their animals to run at large. But the councilmen were afraid to take such a drastic step. The cattlemen still had too much influence.

In fact, the cattlemen and their friends, plus the fishermen, just about ruled the town. Both groups favored maintaining the status quo. They didn't want the town to grow because they realized that growth would jeopardize their interests. They knew Sarasota couldn't be a fishing village and cattlemen's hangout and at the same time be a popular winter resort.

So, quite naturally, the fishermen and cattlemen fought progressive measures. They sided with the town tightwads who were "agin" taxes on general principles—and also, of course, against issuing bonds for public improvements.

The bad times of 1907, however, served to convince some of the tightwads that the town wasn't going to stand still. They began to realize it was either going to go move ahead or slip backward into the deserted

village class. And, much as they hated to part with money, they didn't want that to happen. They became converted to progress because they didn't want to lose their shirts.

Reluctantly, therefore, they refrained from balking when the town progressives persuaded council to ask the state legislature for a special charter giving the town the right to issue bonds. And, wonder of all wonders, they didn't kick over the traces when council finally decided to levy taxes on real estate. A tax rate of five mills was agreed upon—just five mills. All this in 1907.

In the fall elections, held Wednesday, October 9, Arthur B. Edwards was elected Sarasota's first tax assessor. He started work immediately and began to assess all properties in the town limits. He completed the job within three months and the first town tax bills were sent out early in 1908. Now, at last, the town was assured of getting at least a little money for public improvements.

It was a start in the right direction. But only a start. Nothing more. The town was still skating on mighty thin financial ice.

A report of the town's clerk and treasurer, S. D. Hayman, given to council August 12, 1908, showed that the entire town revenue during the preceding nine months totalled only \$3,112. Of this, \$2,350 was obtained from the new real estate tax; the balance, from occupational fees, dog taxes, fines, sale of cemetery lots, and so on.

With such a skimpy revenue, Sarasota limped along, wanting to get ahead but hesitating to pay the full cost of progress.

This betwixt and between attitude was reflected in the town's first bond election held on Tuesday, December 1, 1908—an important date in Sarasota's history.

A proposed \$25,000 bond issue for street paving was approved 46 to 16 but a proposed \$5,000 issue for sewers was defeated by three votes, 23 voting in favor of it and 26 against. The bond trustees elected were Dr. C. B. Wilson, J. B. Turner and William Jeffcott.

After the bonds were sold, in February, 1909, 20-foot limerock "pavement" was laid on Main Street from Gulf Stream Avenue to Orange Avenue, a 16-foot pavement from Orange to Osprey, and a 10-foot pavement to the corporation line. Short sections of Central, Pineapple, Orange, Gulf Stream and Osprey also were paved—with 10-foot pavements. Sarasota began to pull itself out of the sand—and when the paving work started, Sarasotans watched the work with pride!

At long last, Sarasota had taken one step, on its own initiative, toward building a modern town. And it should be recorded here that the town officials who pushed this development program were Mayor G. W. Franklin and Councilmen T. J. Bryan, J. A. Clark, J. Hamilton Gillespie, C. C.

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#### SARASOTA IN THE DAYS OF LONG AGO

Gulf Stream Avenue, as it was in 1901, is shown in the upper picture. The buildings along the shore were fish houses. In the lower picture are shown two of the countless cows which wandered over Sarasota streets for many years. The artistic fountain was donated to the town by J. Hamilton Gillespie. It was located at Main and Palm.

McGinty and R. P. McDaniel. Also deserving credit are men who served as officials during the preceding year, when the special charter was obtained from the state legislature. The mayor then was J. B. Chapline, Sr., and Councilmen Harry L. Higel, J. W. Keener, and William Jeffcott, in addition to McGinty and McDaniel.

These were the men who braved the wrath of the cattlemen and fishermen and started Sarasota on the road to becoming the city it is today.

In the forefront of the progressives who battled to lay the foundations for a modern town was 34-year-old Arthur B. Edwards, a native son of the Land of Sarasota, different in many ways from J. H. Lord, with whom he was associated in the real estate business for more than a decade.

Lord was a giant of a man—Edwards just a little fellow, in comparison, who never weighed more than 150 pounds. But he was strong and wiry, and never seemed to tire, even when he worked day and night.

Edwards always was a leader of the progressives. He fought continuously for better streets, for better schools, for town beautification, for roads to connect Sarasota with the outside world. To this keen-eyed man, the city of Sarasota owes a big debt of gratitude—a debt which never can be repaid in full.

There were other progressives, of course. Of them, Harry L. Higel was one of the most outstanding. A fiery, outspoken man, he was often involved in bitter political fights—but almost invariably, the fights were due to the fact that Higel demanded more and more improvements when the other fellow didn't. A progressive citizen—that man Higel. One of the finest Sarasota ever had.

It was Higel who gave Siesta Key its name—it had formerly been called Sarasota Key. In 1907, Higel organized the Siesta Land Co. with Capt. Louis Roberts, owner of the Roberts' Hotel, and E. M. Arbogast, of Marlinton, W. Va., a winter visitor. They platted the town of Siesta and launched an advertising campaign.

In the advertisements, Siesta was described as a new town located in "the prettiest spot in the world." Said the ad: "Good large streets and avenues have been laid, out to the Gulf of Mexico, where surf bathing and shell gathering has no equal. There are clams, oysters and crabs in abundance."

The financial depression of 1907 killed the Siesta venture for a time. The town was replatted in 1912 and Siesta Key then began to make progress.

Higel was instrumental in organizing the first yacht club in Sarasota. A large club house was built during the summer of 1907 on the north end of Siesta Key and, in November, the club held its grand opening with a

shore dinner prepared under the supervision of Captain Roberts, famed for his clam chowder and other seafood specialties.

The members of this original Sarasota Yacht Club included, besides Higel and Roberts, A. B. Edwards, J. Louis Houle, George W. Franklin, Dr. Jack Halton, J. Hamilton Gillespie, William Jeffcott, C. C. McGinty, J. B. Chapline, Jr., R. P. McDaniel and other prominent citizens. Several of the members didn't even own rowboats—but that didn't stop them from being at least armchair admirals.

During the bad times of 1907, the steamer *Mistletoe* stopped making its tri-weekly runs to Sarasota. John Savarese, owner of the boat, had gotten into financial difficulties and been forced to retrench. To maintain a steamer connection with Tampa, Higel bought the *Vandalia* which he operated for several years, despite the fact that he rarely broke even.

### *Sarasota Almost Goes Up in Smoke*

Because Sarasota lacked a fire department and a water system it came mighty close to being burned off the map during November, 1908.

On Thursday, November 5, fire broke out in the Bay View Hotel, on the northwest corner of Main Street and Palm Avenue, built less than two years before by J. B. Chapline, Sr. The hotel, a 16-room wooden structure, blazed like tinder. The flames leaped high in the sky and a strong west wind carried sparks all over Sarasota.

Everyone in town rushed to the scene. When the fire was at its peak, the wind veered and sparks began flying over the Belle Haven Inn. The crowd stood breathless—and helpless. The town didn't even have a volunteer fire department, much less any hose or fire-fighting apparatus.

Miraculously, however, the flames did not spread to any other buildings. Less than a week later, the large Bradley Livery Stables, on Main Street at the railroad tracks, also burned. The second floor of the three-story building was occupied by roomers; the third floor was used as a lodge room. The fire started late at night and several of the occupants of the building narrowly escaped being trapped by the flames. The structure was completely destroyed.

Following these two fires, insurance companies threatened to quit insuring property in Sarasota unless steps were taken immediately to lessen the fire hazards. A volunteer fire department was formed and three hundred feet of hose purchased. Neither the volunteers nor the hose, however, prevented the George W. Blackburn Hardware Store, on the southeast corner of Main and Palm, from burning to the ground Friday, August 20, 1909. The fire started at 3 a.m., soon after a baker occupying the rear of the building began getting his ovens hot. The flames spread

rapidly and before the volunteer firemen reached the scene, the fire had gotten out of control. But the fire hose was connected with the water tank on the roof of the Belle Haven Inn and adjoining buildings were sprayed, preventing the blaze from spreading.

Blackburn had just finished fully stocking his store and his loss totalled \$25,000, the building being valued at \$5,000 and the stock at \$20,000. He did not have a dime of insurance. Despite his loss, he immediately began making plans for a three-story cement block building. It was finished July 1, 1910. The ground floor was occupied by his hardware store and the Sarasota Furniture Co., the second floor by offices, and the third floor was used as a lodge room.

As a result of the fires, the town council on September 7, 1909, passed an ordinance designed to prevent the construction of any building in which any "combustible materials" was used, in the business section. Despite this ordinance, years were to pass before really fireproof buildings were erected.

### *Real Estate Goes A'Begging*

1908 and 1909 were lean years for Sarasota. Convincing proof of their leanness is provided by a Sarasota booklet published early in 1908 by Chapline & Chapline, engaged then in "Law, Real Estate and Insurance."

The booklet, which was widely distributed and gave Sarasota good advertising, listed 82 bargains. And they really were bargains! For instance:

15-acre tract, 3½ acres under fence and in cultivation, 1½ miles from town, with a nice four-room house, good well and outbuildings, \$500. 20 head of cattle, \$315; horse, wagon, buggy and 50 chickens, \$205. Total, \$1,020. This tract is fine orange and vegetable land.

One-story stone building, 50x75, on Main Street, on lot 50x100. Price, \$2,400.

8½ acres, 6-room house, large barn, tools, etc., one-half mile from town, \$1,500. Also a 20-acre tract adjoining, \$40 an acre.

20-acre tract, 1½ miles north of town, fine orange land; 2 acres cleared, new five-room house. Price, \$600.

Lot and three-room house, one block from bay. \$500.

80-acre tract, 5 miles south of town, 8 acres cleared, four-room house and barn. Price, \$1,020.

And so on and on! Yes, land was cheap, dirt cheap, in Sarasota in those lean years toward the end of the first decade of the new century. Sarasotans were confident they lived in a town which had a future—but the future looked far, far away.

It was just then that Lady Luck decided to give Sarasota a break!

## CHAPTER 9

### A NEW ERA DAWNS

A BITTERLY COLD WIND, straight off Lake Michigan, beat against the windows of Mrs. Potter Palmer's palatial Michigan Boulevard home in Chicago, coating the glass with sleet and snow.

Mrs. Palmer, world-famed socialite, looked out at the dreary sky, muttered a lady-like expression of disgust, and went back to reading idly her copy of the January 23, 1910, issue of the Chicago Sunday Tribune.

Finally she came to the classified ads and, just to keep posted, began reading through them, paying particular attention to those which advertised property for sale. Famous society woman though she was, she also was noted for her business acumen. She had large real estate holdings and always kept track of fluctuations in real estate prices.

Suddenly her interest was aroused by a most unusual ad. Grandiloquently, it told of the wonderful Land of Sarasota, on beautiful Sarasota Bay; yesterday a mere fishing hamlet; today, a modern city born of the Bay, like Venus from the foam of the sea. So said the ad. Reading on, Mrs. Palmer was informed that in the wondrous Sarasota region, once solitary places were being transformed as if by magic into cultivated fields and the wilderness was blooming like a rose.

And, oh yes, there were still tracts of this "richest land in the world" which could be purchased for a trifle. Investors of wisdom and foresight would do well to investigate. Complete details would be given by J. H. Lord, of the real estate office of Lord & Edwards. Offices in the Marquette Building.

Mrs. Palmer put the paper down, leaned back in her chair, and day-dreamed. In her mind's eye, she could see palm trees gently waving in a soft breeze from off the warm Gulf of Mexico. She could see blue skies, and leaping fish in sparkling waters, and flowers blooming in the bright sunshine. What a wonderful place that would be in the winter time! Even lovelier than the French Riviera, which she knew so well.

A woman who acted promptly when she made up her mind, Mrs. Palmer turned to her father, H. H. Honore, and showed him the ad. When he finished reading it, she said: "Father, I wonder if you would kindly stop in at that man Lord's office tomorrow and find out about this place called Sarasota. I believe I might like to see it."

The following day, Honore talked to Lord. And when Lord learned who his caller was, he taxed his powers of eloquence to the utmost to tell

of the charms of Sarasota. Honore was enthralled by the master salesman. He made an appointment for Lord to see Mrs. Palmer.

She too was convinced by Lord that Sarasota was the finest place in the whole wide world to live—and a place where most profitable investments could be made. When Lord left the Palmer mansion, he had Mrs. Palmer's promise that she would go to Sarasota early in February—would be there by February 10.

Tense with excitement, Lord wired to Edwards: "Mrs. Potter Palmer coming to Sarasota. Wonderful chance to give Sarasota world-wide advertising. Prepare place for her and party of four. You know what to tell her. She will buy heavily if interested."

Edwards was stunned when he received the telegram. Mrs. Potter Palmer coming to Sarasota! A woman who was a friend of the King of England and had homes in London and Paris! A woman who had traveled almost everywhere in the world! Mrs. Palmer coming to tiny Sarasota—he could hardly believe the news!

Astounded though he was, Edwards wasted no time. He realized it would be calamitous to house Mrs. Palmer and her party in the Belle Haven Inn. The once fine hotel had become badly run down—and Edwards

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Patients at Sarasota's first sanatorium, opened by Dr. Jack Halton in 1908, did not spend all their time under nurses' care. Many went fishing and brought back big catches. The sanatorium was located on Gulf Stream Avenue.

knew that if Mrs. Palmer was provided rooms there she probably would receive such a poor impression of Sarasota that she would leave hurriedly.

A better place would have to be prepared at once! Edwards called Dr. Jack Halton and made arrangements for converting his sanitarium on Gulf Stream Avenue into a temporary home for the Palmers. Many new pieces of furniture were purchased and the always-immaculate sanitarium was given another going over, from top to bottom. When the work was completed, the sanitarium fairly sparkled.

On Thursday, February 10, the Palmers arrived in Sarasota in a private car—Mrs. Palmer and her two sons, Honore and Potter Palmer, Jr. Mrs. Palmer also was accompanied by her father, H. H. Honore, and her brother, Adrian C. Honore.

Edwards met the party with misgivings. He was afraid that Mrs. Palmer, the world-known celebrity, would be "high hat" and arrogant. But, to his relief, he soon learned she was delightfully friendly and courteous. And instead of being scornful of Sarasota's shabbiness, she called the town "refreshingly quaint."

The famous society woman and Sarasota's native son got along famously. He did not attempt to use high-pressure sales tactics. He merely told her the story of Sarasota as he had known it throughout his life. He told her how he had wandered all through the region, barefooted, when he was a boy—about the big bear he had once seen in a swamp near the foot of Main Street. He told her how the pioneers had lived, and how they wrested a living from the soil. He told her of the community's ups and downs, concealing nothing.

Edwards' sincerity appealed to Mrs. Palmer. She realized he was telling the truth and she became more and more interested in the Land of Sarasota.

A freak of nature helped Edwards in stimulating her interest to the extent of buying property. At the Lawrence Jones home, in Osprey, on Little Sarasota Bay, there grew a cabbage palm and an oak tree which had grown up together, entwined in such a manner that the two looked like one, with palm fronds intermingling with the oak leaves.

Taking Mrs. Palmer and her father on a sight-seeing trip down Little Sarasota Bay in Capt. William Hodges' launch, Edwards suddenly remembered the palm-oak combination. He asked Mrs. Palmer if she would like to see it. She said she would. So they docked at a rickety wharf and walked through the weeds to the spot the trees were growing. She was fascinated. Not only with the trees, but with the view of the beautiful bay, with its sparkling water and palm-fringed shores. Then and there she made up her mind to buy the property as a site for her winter home.

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MRS. POTTER PALMER.

—Changed the course of Sarasota's history

For the Jones' home and 13-acre tract, Mrs. Palmer paid \$11,000—a stiff price in those days. But Jones, a brother of Paul Jones of whisky fame, held out for that amount—so Mrs. Palmer paid it. She then bought more than 200 acres of adjoining land. On this property, Mrs. Palmer soon afterward built her home, "The Oaks," famed for its beautiful gardens.

A few days after the Palmers arrived here, Lord came from Chicago. He and Edwards then alternated taking members of the party on sight-seeing trips all through the region. Some of the trips were made in an auto Lord rented from a friend in Bradenton; most of them were made in horse and buggy.

During the weeks which followed, Mrs. Palmer became thoroughly sold on the Sarasota region and completed arrangements with Lord for acquiring a half interest in his extensive holdings. She also bought large tracts in the Myakka Lake region, a section she later called the most beautiful spot in all Florida.

The news that Mrs. Potter Palmer, one of the nation's leading society women, had chosen "unheard-of Sarasota" for her winter home was a Page 1 story in almost every newspaper of the country. And the Chicago Sunday Tribune—perhaps to prove the pulling power of its classified ads—carried a full-page layout of Sarasota pictures. The Land of Sarasota was advertised as it had never been advertised before.

After building "The Oaks," Mrs. Palmer bought more and more property. Finally, she acquired more than 80,000 acres in the Sarasota region and also made large purchases in Hillsborough County. Her purchases boosted land values in this region to an undreamed-of peak.

To develop the property here, the Sarasota-Venice Co. was organized with Adrian C. Honore as president; W. A. Sumner, vice-president; Potter Palmer, Jr., treasurer, and Honore Palmer, secretary. An extensive advertising campaign was launched to sell small tracts to settlers. The Bee Ridge area was the first to be developed and sold.

Mrs. Palmer then proceeded to establish a model cattle ranch, called Meadow Sweet Pastures, in the Myakka Lake region. To improve the breed of cattle, she purchased prize bulls. She was one of the first persons in the state to advocate cattle dipping to eliminate ticks. At that time, practically all free-range cattle owners fought the tick-eradication measures viciously, insisting dipping would "kill the cows." Mrs. Palmer went ahead and proved it didn't.

The coming of Mrs. Potter Palmer to Sarasota proved to be an epochal event in the history of the town—and the entire Land of Sarasota.

Where one celebrity goes, others also want to go. That's human nature. Moreover, the whole nation learned, through the publicity given

to Mrs. Palmer's purchases, of Sarasota's balmy climate and fertile soil. And for the first time, Sarasota began to be widely known as a winter resort. From then on, the number of winter visitors increased steadily.

New life and hope were injected into the community. Sarasotans began to swell with pride—and they ceased to be content to let Sarasota linger along as a sleepy little fishing village. It was about time, they decided, that Sarasota should be made a modern town. Once this decision was made, improvements came rapidly.

The first was an electric light system—of sorts. A 30-year franchise to provide electricity had been granted, by a vote of the citizens, on April 8, 1909, to H. P. Porter and associates. The plant was to be completed and in operation within a year. Month after month passed, however, and nothing was done.

Finally, after Mrs. Palmer came to Sarasota, the people demanded action and a small plant was installed by Porter, who had organized the Sarasota Ice & Power Co. with R. E. Ludwig as manager. Two feeble lights were put up, one at the Five Points and the other at Main and Palm. Electric light lines were strung through the business section and, later, into the main residential sections.

Years passed, however, before the merchants or townfolk threw their gasoline and oil lamps into the discard. The reason was simple—the electric service couldn't be depended upon. Hardly a night passed without at least one breakdown at the light plant. Moreover, the current was turned on only from dusk to midnight—exactly 12 p.m. each night the town was plunged into darkness. On moonlight nights, there were no street lights at all. During the daytime, no current was available for electrical appliances.

Not until December 7, 1911, did the company graciously condescend to provide "breakfast" current, from 4 a.m. to 6 a.m. During the winter, it's still dark at 6 a.m.—but that made no difference. The company insisted it couldn't give any more "concessions."

Finally, however, the company did make one tremendous concession. It announced with pride on June 8, 1916, that beginning the following day it would inaugurate an "ironing service" from 7 to 11 a.m. on Tuesday and Fridays. "We trust," said the company, "that the women of Sarasota will make the fullest use of this innovation." They did. But they weren't satisfied. They couldn't understand why the company couldn't let the current on all day long so they could iron whenever they cared to. But that was too much to expect.

The fact that Sarasota had electric light troubles didn't stop it from making progress in other ways.

For instance, the town took drastic action July 22, 1910, to pull itself "out of the mud." The waterfront long had been an eyesore, with rotting seaweed and debris littering the shore. But on that memorable July 22, the town council decreed that seawalls must be built—at the expense of the abutting property owners, regardless of how much they might object.

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When a new wing was added to the Belle Haven Inn (originally called the De Soto Hotel) in 1911, Sarasota boasted of having one of the most up-to-date tourist hotels on the entire West Coast.

### *Owen Burns Starts Developing*

During 1911 and 1912, the seawalls were built and fills made between the walls and Gulf Stream Avenue by Owen Burns, a newcomer with ideas. And money. And the persuasive powers of a born promoter. For a time, he almost stole the show.

Born in Frederick, Md., in 1869, Burns was the grandson of Capt. Otway Burns, famed for his exploits in the War of 1812 when he captured 42 English vessels.

Burns, who had been living in Chicago, came to Sarasota on the heels of Mrs. Palmer. A man to make up his mind in a hurry, he had decided that a town good enough for Mrs. Palmer was good enough for him. He arrived in April, 1910, and immediately began buying property right and left. He bought all the remaining holdings of Gillespie and the Florida

Mortgage & Investment Co.—hundreds of lots, large tracts of undeveloped land, and Gillespie's 110-acre golf course.

Burns was not a man who bought property just to hold it, waiting for Dame Fortune to help increase its value. He bought land to develop it—to make it yield the maximum returns. Without question, he must be recorded in history as Sarasota's first outstanding developer. Because of his insistent demands for improvements, regardless of cost, he often made enemies—but he got things done. And he helped immeasurably to beautify the city.

It was Burns who "needled" council into passing the seawall ordinance. Some people said he insisted upon it so he could get the contract for the construction and seawall job. More likely, the truth is what he told council: "Unless you clean up your front yard—and get seawalls built—this town never will amount to a tinker's damn!"

With the seawalls constructed, Sarasota underwent a metamorphosis. No longer did it look like a shiftless fishing village! For the first time, it looked like a real city—a progressive city!

And Sarasota gave Burns full credit for the achievement. On June 4, 1912, he married Miss Vernona Hill Freeman of New York City and the couple spent three months in Europe on a honeymoon. On returning here, Mr. and Mrs. Burns were welcomed by a newly organized brass band and a reception was given in their honor. Soon afterward he put his dredge, the *Sand Pecker*, to work and began making fills to create Sunset Park.

But that's getting ahead of the story—let's get back to 1910, the year Sarasotans saw their first moving picture show.

The "theatre" in which the movies were run was a tent, pitched on a vacant lot at the foot of Main Street. The show was ballyhooed for weeks ahead of time and when the first movie was flashed on the screen, the tent was packed—and scores of people stood outside, waiting for the next performance. It was a big night for Sarasota. Saturday night, November 12, 1910.

The owner of the tent theatre was Harry Griffin who brought his outfit here from Palmetto. Three shows a week were held. The crowds were so good that Griffin bought a larger tent and pitched it at Seventh and Central. To prove how up-to-date he was, he installed a player piano to take the place of the ordinary graphophone! In 1912 he gave Sarasota its first indoor theatre when he leased the ground floor of the newly-built Tonnelier Building on the north side of Main. The theatre was called The Palms.

During 1911, Sarasota got a new bank, a famous home, a revived yacht club, and, of all things, the long sought municipal water works and sewerage system. Let's take them in order.

The new bank, first called the Citizens Bank of Sarasota, was organized March 7, 1911, with Owen Burns as president, O. A. Burton and George W. Franklin as vice-presidents, and R. H. Johnson as cashier. The bank was opened for business July 22, 1911. In August, 1913, the bank received a charter from the treasury department to become a national bank and the name was changed to the First National Bank of Sarasota.

The famous home was The Acacias, erected on Yellow Bluffs, the old homesite of the Whitaker family, by Mr. and Mrs. B. L. Honore, the uncle and aunt of Mrs. Potter Palmer. Following the death of her husband, Mrs. Honore lived there until she died in 1922 at the age of 89.

The Sarasota Yacht Club, which had become dormant during the lean years of 1908-1910, was revived on December 22, 1911, when it was incorporated by Harry L. Higel, J. H. Faubel, G. W. Franklin, J. Louis Houle, J. B. Chapline, Jr., Owen Burns, I. R. Burns, Dr. Jack Halton, Dr. Joseph Halton, and R. M. Johnson. A two-story boat house on Cedar Point was purchased and the club opened March 1, 1912, with Owen Burns as commodore, Dr. Joseph Halton, vice-commodore, and Houle as secretary.

The club, which was active for many years, next purchased a 100-foot lot on Gulf Stream Avenue and erected a large clubhouse which was officially opened January 16, 1913, with 250 guests attending.

The ranks of Sarasota's progressives were reinforced during 1910 and 1911 by the arrival in town of such men as George L. Thacker and Everett J. Bacon—men who wanted things done and done right. With these men, and many others like them, demanding action, it wasn't long before action came.

The big test occurred Tuesday, April 4, 1911, when the voters were called upon to approve or reject a \$20,000 bond issue for building a water works and a sewerage system. It was a no-quarter fight between the do-nothing element and the men who were determined to make Sarasota a modern town. The fight was bitter. As the time for voting neared, tempers flared and fists flew. But the progressives won a clear-cut victory—57 votes for the bonds to 35 against.

Now it was certain Sarasota was not destined to remain a fishing village forever! Nor a Chic Sales shanty town!

A contract for drilling an artesian well and laying the water and sewer mains was let to the American Light & Water Co., the job to cost \$18,840. Before the year ended, the business section and the central residential section had both water and sewers. The water was obtained from a well drilled at Sixth and Lemon, where the police station is now located. The main trunk sewer was laid 400 feet out into the bay.

To extend the water lines to all parts of town, and enlarge the area served by the sewerage system, another bond issue had to be submitted to the voters on October 30, 1912. For the water system, \$15,000 was sought, and for sewers, \$24,000. This time there was little opposition—the bonds were approved by a ten to one vote. A 100,000 gallon concrete reservoir was erected during the following summer at the Sixth and Lemon site.

The town officials who pushed through these programs should not be forgotten. The mayor in 1911 was Hamden S. Smith and in 1912, Harry L. Higel. Councilmen who served during this period were Dr. Joseph Halton, J. W. Harvey, George Roberts, Charles Seale, W. A. Chapell, J. W. Baxter and Hugh K. Browning.

Unfortunately, it cannot be said that the 1911 and 1912 projects solved the town's water and sewer problems. They did not. Pouring the town's sewage into the bay polluted the once crystal clear water and was the direct cause of one of Sarasota's most acute civic headaches in years to come. True enough, the bay, with its tides that rose and fell, seemed large enough to absorb all the town's sewage without causing trouble. It was—when Sarasota was an infant town! But not when Sarasota grew to maturity. However, the town fathers in 1911 and 1912 cannot be criticized. How could they have been expected to foresee the boom-time growth just one decade ahead?

The town's artesian well caused trouble in less than a year. In the late fall of 1913, people began to complain about the water being dark and "thick." Dr. J. L. Thompson said he believed the well was pumping up marl and phosphate. Councilman J. D. Hazen said the water was pure but that it was being discolored by the cast iron pipes. Mayor Higel said a chemical and bacteriological analysis showed it was not harmful.

Still the complaints continued. To solve the problem, the council voted on July 20, 1914, to buy the Houle well at Pineapple and Lemon—the well which had been sunk to get water for making concrete blocks. A connection with the Houle well was made and the water began clearing up. Another well was then dug on the same lot, the reservoir was thoroughly cleaned—and the water came through the faucets crystal clear. Sarasota cheered!

### *The Cattlemen Take a Licking*

"The good Lord created the grazing grounds of the Land of Sarasota—and the good Lord does not want the cattle which graze thereon to be molested. To prevent those cattle from wandering wherever they desire would be flaunting the Lord's will!"

So argued the cattlemen in pious protestations against repeated attempts by progressive Sarasotans to pass laws prohibiting grazing animals from running at large in the corporate limits.

For a full quarter century, the cattlemen and their cohorts controlled enough votes to make sure that the "sacred" cows, and hogs, and goats could go wherever their fancy took them. If they trampled down people's lawns, and ate their shrubbery, and littered up the sidewalks and streets with manure—oh well, that was the Lord's will! Certainly the cattlemen couldn't be blamed!

Neither could the big cattlemen be blamed when some of their "cow hunters" came into town on Saturday nights, got well steamed up on Sarasota "dynamite", and proceeded to race up and down Main Street on their ponies, hell bent for leather! Boys will be boys, you know!

Back in 1903, Mayor Gillespie ordered the arrest of two cow hands who had been particularly hilarious and had emptied their revolvers shooting at passing dogs. But when the time came for the cow hands to be tried, the cowhands' buddies packed the mayor's court and let it be known, in no uncertain terms, that they wouldn't stand for "persecution." Needless to say, the cowhands escaped without being fined.

So it went, year after year. The cowhands did pretty much as they wanted to in town. The hogs wallowed in the Main Street mud puddles—and slept under houses—and the cows roamed hither and yon.

This condition continued up until 1911, after Hamden S. Smith had been elected mayor. That man deserves a world of credit—he braved the cattlemen's wrath and joined with his progressive council to pass history-making Ordinance No. 51, providing penalties for permitting grazing animals to roam within the town limits. The ordinance was passed September 20, 1911.

The cattlemen's long reign was over—but they refused to admit it. They took a test case to court and the judge decreed that the ordinance couldn't be effective until it was ratified by the people. As a result, a special election was called for Wednesday, August 28, 1912. Then followed a battle royal—a fight which made the tussle for water and sewers look like a tea party.

The cattlemen came into town and told the merchants that if the ordinance was passed, they would blacklist the town—they wouldn't come here any more even to get their "licker". The cattlemen threatened here, bulldozed there, and cajoled elsewhere. But their day had passed. When the ballots were counted, the ordinance was approved, 86 to 43.

So another milestone was passed in Sarasota's history. The cows and hogs were banished from the streets and lawns! Now, at long last, resi-

dents could plant grass and have hopes that it wouldn't be eaten to the roots as soon as it sprouted. They could even plant shrubbery! Glory be!

Surely—beyond a doubt—Sarasota was growing up!

### *Real Estate Begins to Zoom!*

The train of events set in motion by the purchases of Mrs. Potter Palmer began traveling at headlong speed in 1911. Let's borrow a historian's telescope and try to see what was happening way back then.

Looking down at the waterfront, we'll first notice the seawalls being built by Owen Burns. And a dredge pumping in sand to cover up the messy mud flats.

Looking southwestward across the bay, we'll next notice a large building being erected on Bay Island, a beautiful tract of land once a part of Siesta Key but separated from it when Harry Higel dredged a cut-off channel in laying out Siesta.

The new building across the water is the Bay Island Hotel, a project planned by E. M. Arbogast, of Marlinton, W. Va. Three stories high, the hotel boasts of 65 rooms. When formally opened January 25, 1912, it was lauded as the largest and most modern hotel on any key on the entire Florida West Coast. Managed and later owned by J. H. Faubel, the hotel long was famous for its meals. And what meals they were! They included every known kind of sea food and, in addition, quail, turkey, venison, duck, and so on and on. All for \$1 a plate—as much as you could eat!

But back again to 1911. During that year, the Seaboard extended its tracks to Venice. No, that's wrong. The railroad went to Venice but it didn't go to Venice. The tracks passed right on through the Venice of old days and the station was built a mile farther south, "out in the wilderness," where it couldn't even be seen from Venice housetops.

The Venetians were so irked by this callous disregard of their existence that they changed, after heated debates, the name of their town to Nokomis. So the Venice of yesterday is the Nokomis of today, and the Venice of today is what yesterday was nothing but a station at the end of the line. Confusing? Well, blame the Seaboard!

### *The Ringlings Come to Town*

From all parts of the nation, from all walks of life, men have come to Sarasota and aided in the upbuilding of the city.

But it is safe to say that no two men have left a more indelible imprint on Sarasota than two sons of a German-born harness maker of McGregor, Iowa. They were John and Charles Ringling—two of the famous seven

Ringling brothers destined to become the world's most renowned circus men.

Books can be—and have been—written about the origin and growth of "the greatest show on earth." The name of Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus is known throughout the land—and it has been for many, many years, even when the grayheads of today were barefoot youngsters, who got up at the crack of dawn to see the circus trains pull in—and the big canvas top go up.

In Sarasota, as well as elsewhere throughout the nation, the name Ringling awakened memories of joyous, never-to-be-forgotten days. Days of cotton candy, pink lemonade, cavorting clowns, trained seals, ferocious animals pacing in their cages, "the biggest elephant in captivity," and death-defying feats of acrobats and trapeze performers.

Yes, everyone knew of the Ringlings. So when Sarasota learned, late in the fall of 1911, that the Ringlings were buying property on Shell Beach and intended spending the winters here, the town was elated—and thrilled. The most famous circus men in the whole wide world coming to Sarasota to live! What more could be asked for?

The Ringlings did not come here just by happenstance. The chain of events which finally culminated in their decision to live in Sarasota was a long, long chain. And, believe it or not, the first link in that chain was the long-derided Slow and Wobbly railroad, conceived way back in 1890—the road which died an inglorious death just a few years later.

Just to show how Fate moves in mysterious ways, a new city to create—let's backtrack to 1890. And, if you begin to think, while reading the next few paragraphs, that we're wandering in a labyrinth of unrelated facts, just remember that the chain of facts finally brings us back to the Ringlings.

The main backer of the Manatee & Sarasota Railway and Drainage Company, the parent of the Slow and Wobbly, was Harvey N. Shepard, a Boston capitalist who had come here several winters to hunt and fish, stopping at the De Soto. He became so enthused about the Land of Sarasota that he put up the first money to get the railroad started.

What's more, when Shepard returned north in April, 1890, he began telling his friends about the "loveliest spot in Florida." Raving on, he declared that when the railroad would be built, "connecting Sarasota with the outside world," land prices would skyrocket. Shepard's enthusiasm was contagious and a syndicate of twenty New Englanders was formed to buy a desirable waterfront tract.

Dr. Frederick K. Williams, of Bristol, Conn., scouted through the Sarasota Bay region in the winter of 1890-91 and finally selected a tract just north of present 33rd Street. The tract contained 267 acres. It was

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SARASOTA AS IT WAS IN 1910

*Above:* Looking east on Lower Main from Palm Avenue. *Below:* Looking west from the Five Points. Notice the stream of water running down the center of the street, the overflow from the Five Points watering trough. The water oaks along the street were planted by J. Hamilton Gillespie in 1886. They were cut down when the street was hard-surfaced.

then owned by John J. Dunne who had bought it up a few years before for \$1 an acre, from the original settlers. Dr. Williams paid \$3,345.50.

The tract was then subdivided and the plat was recorded in October, 1891, as the Indian Beach subdivision. Members of the syndicate were deeded choice waterfront lots. One went to Mrs. Shepard. The remainder of the land was held as an investment. During the next few years a small colony of Connecticut people built winter homes along the beach, including H. C. Butler, Fred Giddings, George W. Neubauer, Silas K. Montgomery, Solomon G. Spring, and Charles E. Raymond. Butler built a 612-foot dock out to deep water, and the *Mistletoe* later stopped there.

That's the first link in the chain. The next link was forged during the summer of 1894 when the Sells-Forepaugh Circus pitched its tents in Bristol, Conn. The manager of that circus was Charles N. Thompson, one of the most skilled circus men in the country.

While in Bristol, Thompson happened to start talking Florida with Butler, then sheriff of the county. Butler praised Indian Beach to the skies—told Thompson he'd never know what real living was until he wintered on Sarasota Bay. Thompson became interested and during the following winter, he and his wife came to the West Coast, staying at Tampa.

Desiring to see the section Butler had lauded so highly, Thompson and some friends got a cat boat and sailed down Tampa Bay. Entering Sarasota Bay, they scouted along the coast and finally docked at Butler's wharf. He remained with Butler overnight and the next day learned of a 154-acre tract just north of Indian Beach, owned by Anna M. Clark, which was for sale for \$1,650. Thompson bought it and later bought 30 acres more.

The following winter, Mr. and Mrs. Thompson came to their newly-acquired Sarasota domain and built their home, which later became one of the show places of the entire Sarasota Bay region. They also began plans for subdividing their property—the plat was recorded in 1897.

One of the first persons to buy a lot at Shell Beach was a circus friend of the Thompsons, W. H. English, advance agent of the Wallace Brothers Circus. Mr. and Mrs. English at once started building a large log house in which they put curiosities they had gathered from all parts of the world. One of the curiosities was a huge snake skin, fully 28 feet long, which English had gotten in South America. It was draped in the hall—and attracted no end of attention.

The Ringlings soon learned that two of their circus brothers had winter homes at Shell Beach. Such news travels fast under the big tops. But the Ringlings weren't interested in Florida then. However, they were close friends of Thompson—and it was Thompson who year after year

kept after them to follow in his footsteps and winter in the land where all the year is summer—and flowers never die.

Another Sarasota booster also was doing his utmost to lure the Ringlings to this section—Ralph C. Caples, then general agent of the New York Central, who years before was indirectly responsible for getting a real railroad built from Tampa to Sarasota. Caples had been visiting Sarasota regularly ever since 1899 and on July 20, 1909, he bought the English home. After that he advertised Sarasota even more than he had before—if that were possible.

The Caples-Thompson publicity team proved irresistible. The Ringlings finally were sold on Sarasota's charms. Yellowing records in the Manatee County courthouse show that on November 3, 1911, Caples bought the Thompson home and a large tract of land—and that on January 31, 1912, less than three months later, Caples resold the house and most of the land to John Ringling.

That started the Ringling ball a'rolling. John began buying more and more land and soon his brother Charles followed suit. By the spring of 1912, Shell Beach was booming. More than 2,000 feet of sea wall were constructed in front of the Ringling and Caples properties. Caples remodeled the English home and John Ringling made extensive improvements in the Thompson home. Charles Ringling started building a home shortly afterward.

The Ringlings had come to Sarasota to stay! Almost immediately they became two of the town's leading citizens. They began taking an active part in civic affairs. They became two of the town's most ardent boosters. And, in the years which followed, their interest in Sarasota never waned. In fact, it increased steadily until both men were called by death.

### *The Infant Sarasota Grows*

The federal census of 1910 showed Sarasota had a population of only 840, including men, women and children.

But early in 1912, the town fathers counted noses and declared that the population had swollen to 1276. Impressed by this almost miraculous growth, Mayor Harry L. Higel and the council decided that the time had come when Sarasota had to be lifted "out of the sand." So on February 7, the council passed an ordinance compelling property owners to put down concrete sidewalks, whenever and wherever council deemed necessary.

Before 1912 came to an end, milady could walk almost anywhere in town without getting sand in her shoes. That is, if she stayed on the sidewalks. Most of the streets still were in bad condition. But they too were due for a going over. A paving program was pushed through by council and early in 1913 contractors began laying brick on Gulf Stream Avenue,

Seventh Street, Orange Avenue and several other streets. Pessimists declared that the sand soon would wash out from under the brick and make the pavements worthless. But their dire predictions proved groundless—some of that original paving is still in use.

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There were no mid-riff bathing suits on Sarasota's beaches in 1909.

By October 2, the Sarasota Times was able to boast proudly that Sarasota had eight miles of concrete sidewalks—just imagine—and that three more would be laid by January 1, 1914. Also, that Sarasota had nearly five miles of paved streets, more than six miles of improved streets, and 2,000 feet of sea walls.

With sidewalks and streets going down, Sarasota became beautification-minded. The women sternly demanded that something be done immediately to improve the appearance of the newly created waterfront "park" south of the Belle Haven Inn, between Palm Avenue and the sea wall, where extensive fills had been made.

Heeding the ladies' peremptory call, Mayor Higel set aside Thursday, November 6, 1913, as a "public work day." All citizens were called upon to lend a hand. Business houses closed. Work started early in the morning when George L. Thacker and Owen Burns hauled in loads of rich dirt. Volunteers shoveled it onto the sterile sand. Doctors, lawyers, merchants and ministers pitched in. Yes, and even politicians.

Mrs. F. H. Guenther, president of the Woman's Club, planted the first grass, loads of which had been separated by newly-organized Boy Scouts. Lunch was served at the Belle Haven Inn to the group of 125 men and women workers. During the afternoon the crew was increased to nearly 200.

Reported the Sarasota Times: "Nearly everyone in the city participated in the work. Those who were unable to contribute time or labor gave cash donations. Burns had three teams working all day long. Edwards and Locklear each had one. A number of palm trees were planted and the whole park was grassed before night.

"At the luncheon, clam chowder was provided by Capt. Louis Roberts and the Sarasota Cafe. The meal, provided by 50 members of the Woman's Club, consisted, in addition to the clam chowder, of crackers, pickles, cheese, ham sandwiches, baked beans, macaroni and cheese, doughnuts and coffee. No one went hungry. And wonderful work was done."

The grass grew rapidly. Soon Sarasota had a park of which it could be proud. The only trouble was that the city did not own the land. Title to it was held by private individuals who also held all riparian rights. In order to get the most possible money for its holdings, the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co. had not left the town one-foot of water front property.

Even the waterfront at the foot of Main Street had been sold. It was there the British concern had built its first wharf. Higel bought the wharf and adjoining land late in the Nineties for \$1,500. In 1905, he offered to sell it to the town for the price he had paid for it. His offer was rejected—the town fathers said the price was exorbitant, and, besides, the town didn't have any money. Five years later, when real estate values had begun to soar, Higel again offered to sell it, this time for \$5,000. Once more, his offer was turned down.

Finally, Higel sold it to three men from Lima, Ohio, who had more faith in the future of Sarasota than did many of the old timers, who still retained their fishing village ideas. The Ohioans who made the purchase were Dr. W. E. Hover and two younger brothers, J. O. and Frank B. Hover. They immediately began repairing the dock and extended it 50 feet farther into the bay. They then constructed an arcade, known for years thereafter as the Hover Arcade, at a reported cost of \$20,000. The building was started February 10, 1913, and completed in July. Four years later the arcade and pier were purchased by the city for \$40,000.

Another Buckeye came to Sarasota about the same time as the Hovers—John F. Burket, of Findley, Ohio, an attorney who came from a family long famed in the legal profession. In the years which followed, Burket played an increasingly active role in civic affairs and was one of the most

zealous advocates of the Sarasota County movement. For years, he served as city attorney.

Burket was persuaded to come here by his old friend, Ralph C. Caples, who said it was about time Sarasota got a lawyer who "really knows his stuff."

On October 10, 1912, Caples and Burket bought the Belle Haven Inn from the Southern Investment Co. which had purchased it in 1902. Caples also bought from the same company 55 city lots—he sensed that the growth of Sarasota had merely just begun and he decided to back his faith with dollars. Later, he invested more and more heavily. He also built a Main Street building called the Caples Block.

But to get back to the Belle Haven. When Caples and Burket bought it, the inn was operated by Dr. Jack Halton. The following year it was leased to C. T. Whittle, an Atlantic City hotel man, who bought the property October 1, 1914, at a reported price of \$35,000. During the Big Boom, Whittle and his son sold it, according to reports, for \$500,000 cash!

The appearance of Main Street began to change rapidly during 1912. During that year, two new buildings were constructed, the Watrous Hotel, on the southwest corner of Main and Palm, and the Tonnelier Building, on the north side of Main a little west of Pineapple, on the site of the old Broadway House, built in 1887. When completed, the Tonnelier Building was the largest "modern" building in Sarasota. Three stories high, it housed the Palms Theatre and the Palms Hotel, with 38 rooms. It was supposed to be fireproof. But it wasn't.

Events moved so rapidly in 1912 and 1913 that it's hard to keep track of them. But mention certainly must be made of Sarasota's "grand" new school, erected during the spring and summer of 1913 at a total cost of \$23,000. Built of brick, it contained eleven recitation rooms and an auditorium—and the school trustees proudly declared it was large enough to take care of Sarasota's needs for at least ten years. So they sold the old frame building, built in 1904, and moved it off the lot.

But the school board members did not correctly foresee the future. When the new building was opened for classes on Monday, September 15, 1913, more than 350 students were enrolled. To be exact, 200 girls and 153 boys. And when it was decided, the following fall, to add two more grades and make the school a full-fledged high school, as well as an elementary school and junior high, the old frame building had to be brought back again and put in use.

The names of the first teachers in Sarasota's shiny new school building, during the winter of 1913-14, should be recorded. Prof. T. W. Yarbrough, dean emeritus of the local public school system, was the principal of the high school; Miss Pansy Souter principal of the elementary school. The

teachers were Miss Mary Hawley, Miss Maybird Heath, Miss Marguerite Seale, Miss Louise Floreus, and Miss Belle M. Story.

The first graduates of Sarasota high school were all girls: Misses Emma Gene Smith, May Estelle Houle, Mildred Lovell Freeman and Lessy Estelle Thomas. The graduation exercises were impressive. Said the Times: "Occupying seats on the stage were the Rev. H. C. Hardin, of the Methodist Church; Mayor A. B. Edwards and Councilman George L. Thacker, R. I. Kennedy, Dr. Jack Halton, Frank H. Tucker, Col. O. K. Reaves, and Prof. Yarbrough, principal who for seven years has worked to give Sarasota a high school—and very proud he was of this, his first class to graduate." Mrs. Jack Halton and Miss Genevieve Higel provided musical entertainment.

The only disturbing note in the whole program was a statement made by Prof. Yarbrough that the school had suffered badly during the term because of the heavy turnover of teachers, due to the fact that they were paid only \$50 and \$55 a month—and it cost them that much to live. He said salaries would have to be raised if high educational standards were to be maintained. Years were to pass, however, before the teachers' salaries were raised to the proper level—probably they haven't been even yet!

#### *Another Newspaper Is Established*

A brilliant but most eccentric man came to Sarasota in the fall of 1912—a man who was a cross between a genius and a bum. He had the eloquence of an old-time Shakespearean actor and a vocabulary surpassed by none. He was a man of moods—witty and charming one moment, and venomously bitter the next. He wore his hair long, a la Elbert Hubbard, and seldom if ever bathed. He never wore socks; his feet were protected only by canvas shoes.

This strange man was Rube Allyn. Irish by descent, he was born in Canada, but came to the United States when a youth. He eventually became a vaudeville actor and at one time lectured on the Chautauqua circuit. Finally he drifted to Florida and eventually to Sarasota.

Without money, he secured enough local backing to buy a printing press and some type and set up shop in a small warehouse on Andy Glover's dock, a short distance northwest of the Main Street wharf. There, in January, 1913, he began printing the Sarasota Sun, the second newspaper to be established in the town. On his masthead he printed: "Issued Every Saturday The Best We Know How."

Had Allyn been a little more stable and dependable, he undoubtedly would have been able to publish a paper which would have carried weight in the community. He was liberal and progressive, and an excellent writer. But he lacked good judgment and when hot political campaigns

occurred, he poured vitriol on candidates he opposed. So much vitriol, that even the men he supported were appalled.

Allyn spent money faster than he made it. Finally, his creditors began to catch up with him. In a characteristic move to attract attention, he sawed off the warehouse from the wharf one night, slid it onto a raft, and started towing it to Siesta Key. Perhaps that's the first time in history that a newspaper plant took to sea on a raft. Half way across, the raft capsized and the plant fell into the water. It was not recovered for months and most of the machinery was ruined.

Late in 1915, Allyn began getting out his paper more and more irregularly. His advertising almost disappeared. Then, early in 1916, the paper passed out of existence. The Sarasota Sun went into an eclipse from which it never emerged. For a year or so longer, Allyn lived on the key and made a precarious living by fishing and writing articles for other papers. During World War I, he worked at the Hog Island ship yards near Philadelphia. He returned in December, 1919, and in August, 1920, started publishing the Florida Fisherman. (See Page 202.)

### *Sarasota Becomes a City*

By the spring of 1913, it became obvious even to the most chronic pessimist, that the one-time fishing village of Sarasota was destined to become one of the leading winter resorts on the Florida West Coast.

Therefore, no one voiced objections when the council decreed that Sarasota should step out of the town class and become a full-fledged city. A plea was made to the state legislature for a city charter—and it was granted. Governor Park Trammell signed the enabling statute May 16, 1913, to become effective January 1, 1914.

The new charter provided for a mayor and three councilmen, to be elected by wards. It stipulated that for ordinary purposes, the rate of taxation should not exceed ten mills on the dollar and that special taxes "may be levied not exceeding ten mills for a sinking fund, not exceeding five mills exclusively for street work, and not exceeding one mill for city advertising."

Despite the limitations, the new charter now gave the council a chance to get money to pay for vitally needed public improvements. The last bar to civic progress had been removed.

The honor of being the first mayor of the newly-incorporated City of Sarasota was given to Arthur B. Edwards at the first election authorized by the new charter. Citizens cast their ballots December 6, 1913. Edwards received 108 votes and his opponent, William Worth, 63. Councilmen elected were: J. W. Baxter, first ward; Prof. T. W. Yarbrough, second ward, and George L. Thacker, third ward.

One of the first acts of the new city officials was to pass an ordinance, February 10, 1914, prohibiting persons from permitting chickens to run at large. Certainly it wasn't becoming for a modern, progressive city to have chickens pickety-peckating along the streets—so the chickens were banned, just as the hogs and cows had been a short time before.

But that was the least of the accomplishments of the new city government. New wells were secured to improve the city's water supply. Sewer and water mains were extended to all populated areas. The limerock "paving" on Main Street was covered with asphalt, making it as smooth "as a billiard table," as Mayor Edwards proudly remarked.

Ten more miles of brick and asphalt paving and fourteen more miles of sidewalks were laid during the second year of Mayor Edwards' administration. Sarasota was pulling itself out of the sand with a vengeance. More and more, Sarasota began to look like a modern city, and less and less like a fishing village.

The process of transformation was pushed along by the Woman's Club, successor to the Town Improvement Society. Practically all the progress-minded women of Sarasota were members of the club and to them goes the credit for spurring on all the residents to plant grass and shrubs, and beautify their homes with gardens in which flowers bloomed the whole year around.

### *Sarasota Threatened By Fire*

An epidemic of fires, far more destructive than those of 1908 and 1909, came close to gutting the business section before the new city government finally succeeded in getting modern fire fighting apparatus.

The first bad fire occurred Saturday, January 18, 1913, when the 30-room Bay View Hotel on Central Avenue, completed just a year before, burned to the ground. S. D. Hunton, the owner, said his loss was \$10,000.

Almost a year later, the Dancy Block on the south side of Main Street, then owned by Mrs. Potter Palmer, was destroyed by flames. Henry Behrens, chief of the volunteer fire fighters, was valiantly assisted in battling the fire by Leonard Rudd, George Lambert and Valley Aill who risked their lives by standing on the roof of an adjoining building and handling the hose. But the water pressure was low and the volunteers succeeded only in preventing the fire from spreading. Stocks of merchandise on the shelves of three stores in the block went up in smoke, including a large supply of fireworks in the racket store of Willis & Lord.

The old home of Hugh K. Browning, on Palm Avenue, was destroyed by another fire on March 2, 1914. Said the Times: "By the time the hose reels were hauled eight blocks by hand, there was little left worth trying

to save and, as usual, the firemen were almost exhausted by their exertions in getting to the scene. A motor truck with an operator always on hand to start at the first alarm would save the valuable seconds that mark the difference between salvation and destruction."

This fire, and several smaller ones which followed during the summer, convinced the city council that it must buy modern fire fighting equipment, even though many taxpayers objected at the "terrible expense." After advertising for bids, the council ordered a \$9,000 combination chemical pump and hose truck from the American La France Fire Engine Co., early in January, 1915.

Before the fire engine was received, Sarasota suffered the worst fire in its history, described for years thereafter as the \$100,000 blaze. It started early Monday morning, March 8, 1915, in the ancient building on the northwest corner of Main and Pineapple once used as a town meeting place, as a church, and as a dance hall. At the time of the fire, the building had been remodeled and was owned by J. H. Lord. The lower floor was occupied by a 5 & 10 cents store and a shoe repair shop.

When the first alarm was sounded, the flames were confined to the shoe repair shop. But before the volunteers arrived with their inadequate hose, the whole building was blazing. Winter visitors who had rooms on the second floor were rescued with difficulty. Within a few minutes, the flames had leaped to a small adjoining building on Main, occupied by a fruit stand. There, the firemen thought they could halt the fire because the reportedly "fireproof" Tonnelier Building was next in line.

But the brick veneer walls on the new building, three stories high, were not an obstacle to the searing, scorching flames. Within a half hour, the entire building was blazing, and the fire could be seen for miles. The 53 guests in the Palm Hotel, located in the building, poured into the street carrying their belongings. By this time, the entire business section was endangered. A call for help was sent to Bradenton and that city's fire truck made a record run to Sarasota.

Occupants of all nearby buildings worked frantically all night to remove everything possible out of the danger zone. One of those who worked the hardest was Mrs. C. V. S. Wilson, publisher of the Sarasota Times, whose plant adjoined the Tonnelier Building. Helped by volunteers, she managed to get all her records and most of the furniture out of the plant but the precious printing presses were too heavy to move. Then, all Mrs. Wilson could do was pray that the fire would spread no farther.

It didn't—thanks to the work of the volunteers. Many of them suffered burns and all became weakened by exhaustion—but they kept on fighting the inferno. Dr. Jack Halton and Dr. C. B. Wilson worked all

night treating the firemen's burns and removing cinders from their eyes. The clothing of every fireman was ruined.

Just at dawn, a few minutes before the Bradenton truck arrived, the fire was gotten under control. The loss was heavy. Besides the buildings valued at \$30,000, everything in them was destroyed. Dr. Joseph Halton

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#### A "FIREPROOF" BUILDING WHICH WENT UP IN SMOKE

Sarasota was proud of this Tonnelier Building, erected in 1912, which housed the Palms Theatre and Palms Hotel. It was advertised as the town's first fireproof building but it burned to the ground March 8, 1915.

lost his entire office equipment, including instruments and library. Others who lost heavily were the Costello brothers, T. and L., owners of the Palms Hotel; Phil Levy, owner of the New York Store; Edgar Maus, owner of the Palms Theatre; Robert Franklin, owner of the Crescent Pharmacy; J. H. Krebbiel, owner of a barber shop; Mrs. E. L. Frazier, owner of a bakery, and George Spero, owner of a fruit stand.

But soon after the smoke from this big fire had blown away, Sarasota's new fire engine arrived, on April 27, 1915. The engine, capable of pump-

ing 750 gallons a minute with sufficient force to throw a stream over a building 100 feet high, was housed in the old volunteers' headquarters on Pineapple Avenue. And council went a step farther and employed Henry Behrens as fire chief, paying him the munificent salary of \$75 a month. And he only had to be on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week! What a snap!

### *An Airplane Comes To Sarasota*

No old-time resident of Sarasota ever will forget Thursday, April 9, 1914. Because on that day, many Sarasotans saw their first airplane—a weird contraption which defied all the laws of gravity and actually flew! That is, providing bad winds weren't blowing.

Anyhow, it was a marvelous ship, the first airplane which flew over Sarasota, bringing everyone outdoors to stare up at the sky with mouths agape.

That history-making airplane was flown by Tony Jannus, star pilot of the Benoist Company, which shortly before had established the first commercial airline in the country, between St. Petersburg and Tampa. Jannus brought with him as a passenger on that epochal trip, Will Warren, of Bradenton. The flight here from Bradenton required only 27 minutes, despite the fact that he circled over the bay, traveled 20 miles and encountered rain. Nearly a mile a minute! That was mighty fast going!

Jannus brought his plane, an airboat, safely to rest on Sarasota Bay and the next day took up passengers. The first ride was auctioned off by Rube Allyn to Owen Burns, who paid \$50. The distinction of being the first woman who flew over Sarasota Bay was won by Mrs. I. R. Burns. Others who flew included Dr. and Mrs. Jack Halton, and their son, Jack, Jr., Miss Esther Edmondson, Mr. and Mrs. T. Gilmore Edmondson, and Rube Allyn.

Several of the passengers requested that Jannus take them over Bird Key so they could get a good look at the glistening white home just being built by Thomas W. Worcester, of Cincinnati. This was the first expensive home built on any island in the Sarasota Bay region. It was named New Edzell Castle after the ancestral home of Mrs. Worcester, in Scotland. It was opened February 17, 1914, with a reception attended by 50 guests. It is now the home of Mrs. Ida Ringling North.

Flying inland, the passengers were given the opportunity to observe another type of habitation. Out on 33rd Street they could see tiny homes being erected by negroes in the colored community of Newtown, then being opened by Charles N. Thompson, not to make money but to provide the negroes with better places in which to live. Previously, their principal living quarters had been at Black Bottom, in the vicinity of 12th and Lemon. The dilapidated buildings, owned by prominent Sarasotans, were

a disgrace to Sarasota. Most of the shacks had only unsanitary, open privvies and not until Dr. John R. Scully became health officer, years later, was any move made to provide better sanitation facilities.

### *Sarasota Fights For Better Roads*

So far as highways were concerned, Sarasota was practically isolated from the rest of the world for more than a quarter century after it was founded.

South of Tampa, the so-called roads were nothing but trails. As the years rolled by, flimsy bridges were built here and there and fitful attempts were made to establish roadbeds across some of the worst bogs. But up until 1912 the roads were next to impassable in many places. In dry weather, wheels often sank hub deep in clutching sand; during the rainy season, wheels stuck in clutching mud.

Finally, in 1911, the county commissioners of Hillsborough County began to listen to the pleas of their rural constituents and sponsored a bond issue to build a hard-surfaced road southward. At the same time, voters of Manatee County, of which Sarasota was then a part, approved a \$250,000 bond issue to build a road from the Hillsborough County line to Sarasota.

This road, only nine feet wide, was completed to the town limits early in March, 1912. About all that can be said for it is that it was a start in the right direction. The alleged "hard-surfacing" soon began to crumble and over long stretches the road became so full of potholes that motorists were held to a snail's pace. If they speeded up to more than ten miles an hour and weren't extremely careful, their tires were torn to shreds.

Because of the bad roads, few winter visitors ventured to come to Sarasota by auto.

In 1914, the Sarasota progressives decided that they had waited long enough for Manatee County to provide an adequate road system. They made up their minds to establish a road district of their own, and to back a bond issue to build roads to connect Sarasota with Venice, Bee Ridge and Fruitville. At the same time, good roads boosters in Englewood began laying plans for building a road north to Venice.

To determine what type of roads would be best suited for this section, a delegation of good road advocates spent the first week of September, 1914, traveling through central Florida, inspecting roads in every locality visited. The names of those good roads "nuts", as they were called, should be carved in marble—they were the men who pioneered the way for the good-roads boosters of later years.

Those early good-roads men were: Arthur B. Edwards, John F. Burket, George B. Prime, F. H. Guenther, George L. Thacker, Harry L. Higel,

Clarence Hitchings, Dr. Jack Halton, Rube Allyn, D. Binkhorst, A. S. Woodward, O. P. Collins, Claude Hebb, R. C. Bruce, George W. Franklin, Cary B. Fish, Furman Helveston, T. J. Bryan, E. J. Bacon and A. M. Wilson.

On their return, these men began fathering plans for winning public support for a bond issue of \$250,000—a lot of money in those days. They were opposed at first by J. H. Lord, biggest landowner in the Land of Sarasota. He said that issuance of the road bonds “means a practical doubling of every man’s taxes” and he emphatically declared that the community could not stand such “crushing indebtedness.”

In a crushing reply, the Sarasota Times retorted: “If we wait until we can afford to bond for roads and bridges, will we ever get them? . . . Can we afford *not* to vote for bonds?”

Ex-Mayor Higel joined in the chorus and declared that because of public improvements, Lord’s choice business lots had increased in value from \$6,000 to at least \$30,000. He also said that Lord and his associates then owned vast tracts of lands for which they had paid a couple dollars an acre and “now are getting \$60 an acre.”

Lord finally was convinced of the need for good roads and when he became a convert, he was truly converted. Said he on October 15, 1914: “We need new highways and a proper drainage system to protect them. Every citizen realizes the value of better roads. The cost of building them is nothing in comparison with the enhancement of values they will bring. We must work together to secure a good road system which will be worthy of the name and open up the way for future development of the county.”

The test on the good roads issue came Tuesday, March 16, 1915. And the good roads boosters won a smashing victory—the \$250,000 bond issue was approved four to one. In Sarasota, 98 voted in favor of it to 25 against and in Venice, the vote was 7 for and 1 against. Osprey went all out for the program, casting 13 votes for the bonds with none against it.

Just before the bonds were sold, however, it was discovered that the road building program would have to be replanned—there simply wasn’t enough money voted to build 34 miles of 15-foot roads, as desired. The \$250,000 would be enough to build only 9-foot roads. So again the good roads program had to be presented to the voters. Everyone wanted 15-foot roads instead of the dinky 9-foot strips, but nearly all citizens agreed that 9-foot roads were better than none at all. So the bonds were again approved, January 11, 1916.

After the bonds were sold, the county commissioners awarded a contract for the construction of a 9-foot asphalt road from Sarasota to Venice to the Continental Public Works Co., of New York. The contract

for bridges on the Venice road, and also one from the mainland to Siesta Key, went to the Luten Bridge Co., of York, Pa. The road was to cost \$208,668.05; the bridges, \$39,850.

With the work on roads and bridges in the Sarasota Bay district under way, the good roads advocates concentrated their fire on the Manatee County commissioners in an attempt to get the Sarasota-Bradenton road improved. A delegation of 29 men ganged together and stormed into the commissioners' office Monday, October 2, 1916.

Said Edwards: "You commissioners may not have to come to Sarasota but regardless of whether we like it or not, we Sarasotans have to go to Bradenton. And it's almost impossible to get over the road without one or two blow-outs." Chimed in Capt. George Roberts: "The last time I came here I ruined two tires and new ones cost me \$36."

Others who blasted the commissioners were Dr. J. Barney Low, J. Elwood Moore, J. H. Faubel, Mayor Harry L. Higel, William M. Taylor, J. G. Campbell, J. H. Strohmeyer, J. Louis Houle, Dr. F. W. Schultz, George L. Thacker, Russell Thompson, J. W. Madison, Phil H. Levy, C. G. Strohmeyer, R. I. Kennedy, J. Harry King, George Strong, Allan E. Simmons, John F. Burket, Hal Yohe, R. W. Grinton, Spencer Olson, Bert Hayslip, Charles French, Edward S. Williams, Frank Lacey, B. R. Reno and Charles Grosse.

The commissioners said it would cost \$21,000 to put the road in good condition but they assured the delegation they would take action immediately. They partly kept their word. Some of the worst places in the road were patched up but it wasn't until after the end of World War I that the road was worked on in earnest. And it wasn't until the Big Boom days when a modern highway between the two towns was constructed.

The Siesta Key bridge was completed March 2, 1917, and cars began going over it. However, the approaches were not completed and the bridge formally opened until May 1. At last—32 years after the founding of Sarasota—the town was connected with one of its outlying keys and people could drive directly to the beautiful gulf beaches!

### *Out On the Keys*

The Land of Sarasota has 26 miles of the finest beaches in the world, out on the keys which fringe the coast, separating the mainland from the Gulf of Mexico.

Not until the Siesta Bridge was opened in the spring of 1917 did any of these keys have a direct connection with the mainland. As a result, their development was long retarded. For many decades their only inhabitants were itinerant fishermen who lived in palmetto shacks and sold their salt-cured fish to traders.

In the Eighties, however, a few homesteaders began settling there. They weren't attracted to the keys by the rich shell-hammock lands or by the beautiful, hard-packed, sparkling beaches. They went there simply because the Florida Internal Improvement Board had practically stopped homesteading on the mainland in 1883 by deeding away almost all the land to speculators. For some strange reason, the politicians and land grabbers happened to miss the keys—so there the homesteaders went.

However, the keys were too remote from civilization, because of a lack of bridges, for even the hardy pioneers and few of them remained long enough to prove up their claims. Most of them sold their rights to persons who sensed that some day the keys would come into their own—and were willing to buy the land and wait for development.

But that wasn't the case with Louis Roberts, a native of Key West who came here in 1878 while on a trip up the West Coast in his small fishing smack. Soon after his arrival, Roberts met and fell in love with Ocean Hanson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Hanson, who settled on Little Sarasota Bay in 1870. Miss Hanson, by the way, was named "Ocean" because she was born on the Atlantic while her parents were coming to America from England.

Soon after Roberts and Miss Hanson were married, they decided to get a homestead of their own so they filed a claim to a choice tract on Sarasota Key, almost directly across the bay from the Hanson property.

Building a home, Roberts cleared enough land for a large garden and began making a living as a fisherman. There, on the key, Mr. and Mrs. Roberts raised a family. And, as the family increased in size, Roberts kept making additions to his home. Along about the turn of the century, he began taking in a few winter visitors as guests.

Soon he learned that catering to the "tourist" trade was more profitable than either fishing or farming so, along about 1906, he enlarged his house again and began calling it the Roberts Hotel. During the following year, he joined with Harry L. Higel and E. M. Arbogast in forming the Siesta Land Co. which platted the subdivision of Siesta—"a wonderful place to rest."

Thereafter, Roberts called his hotel the Siesta Hotel—and the name of the north end of Sarasota Key also was changed to Siesta. Today, the entire key is called Sarasota Key on government maps and Siesta Key on the county map. So, if you like one name better than the other, take your choice and you will have proof that you are right.

Siesta Hotel soon became famed along the entire West Coast, partly because of its location amid towering palms but mostly because of Roberts' delicious shore dinners. Old timers insist that no one, anywhere, could

make as good clam chowder as Cap Roberts, or fry fish as well. So his hotel prospered.

But the same cannot be said for the subdivision of Siesta. Few persons wanted to live there then, due to the fact that the key could be reached only by boat. The fame of the key spread by the opening of the Bay Island Hotel early in 1912 but that did not greatly stimulate the sale of lots. Neither did an extensive program carried out by Higel from 1911 through 1913. Bayou Hanson, Bayou Nettie and Bayou Louise were dredged and canals opened. Bath houses were erected on the gulf beach and a 150-foot dock built. Incidentally, those bath houses, built by Higel in October, 1913, made it possible for Sarasotans, for the first time, to dress and undress at the beach without having to hide behind a clump of palmettos!

During the winter of 1914-15, Higel built the Higelhurst Hotel, on the north end of the key at Big Sarasota Pass. But on March 31, 1917, just before the bridge was formally opened, the hotel burned to the ground. Higel's loss was \$20,000.

Siesta Bridge was hailed by the people of Sarasota. It represented a great stride forward by the community. Now, the beautiful gulf beaches were brought within a 15-minute drive of the center of the city, and swimmers and shell-gatherers rejoiced!

### *Sara De Soto Lives—and Dies Again!*

Beautiful Sara de Soto, daughter of the famous Spanish conquistador, lived in her father's camp on Sarasota Bay—some 400 years ago. She was worshipped from afar by Chichi-Okobee, son of a famous Indian chief. Chichi was captured by the Spaniards. He became sick and Sara nursed him back to health. Then she too was stricken. Chichi sped away to get the Indians' medicine man who cared for her day and night. But beautiful Sara died. Her body was taken to the center of Sarasota Bay for burial. Chichi and a hundred Indian braves slashed their canoes with tomahawks and sank in the water to lay beside her, and guard her body throughout eternity.

So goes the legend of Sara de Soto—the legend which has become part of Sarasota's lore.

In the spring of 1916, Sarasotans remembered that the tragic love story of Sara de Soto and Chichi Okobee had never been properly commemorated. The city was in a holiday mood that spring. The war in Europe had made the United States prosperous and Sarasota was booming. The future looked bright. So Sarasota decided to bring beautiful Sara back to life again so the tragic romance could be reenacted—in pageantry.

That first Sara de Soto pageant, which started Tuesday, March 22, 1916, and lasted through the following Saturday, was quite an affair. It

was widely advertised and thousands of visitors jammed Sarasota. A gay, holiday mood pervaded the city. All the buildings were decorated with flags and bunting. A carnival company brought a merry-go-round, Ferris wheels, and all sorts of amusements. Scores of floats and autos took part in a big parade. There were programs of aquatic events, and field races, and fireworks. To put it mildly, the pageant was the biggest event in Sarasota's amusement history.

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The coronation of the queen at the first Sara de Soto pageant in 1916. The queen was Genevieve Higel, daughter of Mayor Harry L. Higel, shown standing on the platform at the right. The chief in the pageant was J. B. Chapline, brother of George F. Chapline who wrote the Sara de Soto legend.

The pageant was staged and directed by Mr. and Mrs. Jake Chapline, assisted by Dr. Jack Halton. The part of Sara de Soto was played by Miss Genevieve Higel, now Mrs. Voltaire B. Sturgis, great granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Whitaker, Sarasota's first settlers. Jake Chapline was Chichi-Okobee and I. R. Burns, De Soto.

The Spanish soldiers were C. O. Teate, F. P. Dean, J. W. Crawford, W. M. Tuttle, T. C. Williams, B. R. Reno, Ed Williams, George L. Thacker, J. Louis Houle, C. Woodburn Matheny, E. J. Bacon, P. D. Lacey, and Howard Elliott. The Indian warriors were Will Franklin, John Lacey, Paul Thompson, Rube Hayes, Talbot Caven, T. W. Redd, W. Phillips, George Willis, Thomas Williams, Louis Warner, H. L. New, Mason Hunt, Parker and Heiser. The medicine man was Col. J. B. Fletcher and the captain of the guards was Cary B. Fish.

W. M. Taylor was director of floats and autos in the parade; J. H. Yohe, in charge of music; A. B. Edwards, director of tournaments and sports; George Blackburn, director of aquatic sports; Frank Anthony, director of field races and sports; E. J. Bacon and H. M. Hebb, fireworks; H. N. Hall, dancing, and R. E. Ludwig and C. M. Jefferson, illuminations. Harry L. Higel, then mayor, presented the keys of the city to De Soto.

Entrance of the United States into World War I prevented another pageant being held in 1917 and the festival idea was not revived until 1925. By that time Sarasota was dominated completely by the "knickerbocker army" of real estate salesmen who could see no romance in anything so ancient as the Sara de Soto love story. So they called their festival the Orange Blossom Festival and gaudy spectacles took the place of sentiment.

The Sara de Soto pageant was revived in 1928 with Samuel Gumpertz in charge of the event. It was estimated that more than 25,000 persons witnessed the three-day celebration. Miss Nell Shipman, a movie actress, took the part of Sara. Miss Mary Welch, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Homer T. Welch, was the queen during the pageant of 1929 and Miss Helen Bond was queen in 1930.

Then came the Great Depression and the pageant was not held again until 1935 when it was revived a second time by Thomas L. Glenn, Jr., then president of the Junior Chamber of Commerce. The festival was one of the finest ever held and proved to be such a drawing card that it was repeated each spring thereafter until the involvement of the United States in World War II put an end to celebrations. It was held again during the week of February 18-23, 1946.

### *Sarasota Buys a Pier*

The need for a municipally owned pier which could be used for entertainment became strikingly apparent during the Sara de Soto pageant of 1916. Citizens began clamoring for a pier large enough to provide space "at least for a sun parlor, a band shell, an open pavilion, a bath house and a wharf keeper's office."

Harry L. Higel, then mayor, did nothing to stifle the clamor. In fact, he encouraged it. He had been advocating a municipal pier for years so the public demand received his hearty support. The three councilmen—E. J. Bacon, K. M. Hebb and George L. Roberts—also approved the idea. So they pushed through an ordinance providing for the issuance of an \$18,000 bond issue to build a pier. It was approved, 45 to 29, at a special election September 5, 1916.

But when the time came to build the pier, the city fathers found they had no place to build it. The foot of Main Street was owned by the Hover brothers and the foot of Strawberry Avenue by the Seaboard. The only possible locations were the foot of Mound Street, far removed from the center of the city, and the foot of a 20-foot alley between Main and Seventh, obviously too narrow for a pier entrance.

Confronted with this lack of waterfront property, the city fathers stewed and fretted and finally decided that the only thing which could be done was to buy the Hover Arcade and dock. A \$40,000 bond issue to purchase the property was approved by the voters, 59 to 1, at a special election March 6, 1917. The identity of the lone voter who disapproved of the purchase was never learned.

Despite World War I, work on the new pier was pushed ahead and it was accepted by the city September 4, 1918. A pavilion was constructed at the end of the pier to serve as a combined freight warehouse and anglers' headquarters. The old Hover dock was removed by October 1. In September, 1919, the pavilion was remodeled and "the city's latest and most up-to-date amusement place," to quote the *Sarasota Times*, was opened by Leon Pickett. It was called "Tokio" and was used for a short time as a dance hall. A little later, the American Legion secured the pavilion for its first club rooms.

But the new pier did not last long. In 1921 there came a hurricane—and into the sea went the wooden structure.

### *Sarasota During World War I*

From the time the United States entered World War I until peace was declared a year and a half later, the people of Sarasota did not devote much time to thinking about the growth of the town. The newspapers were eagerly read for news from the training camps and battle fronts, not for news of Sarasota affairs.

Sarasota won the distinction of being the first small city in the United States to enlist an entire deck division of state militia. This honor came Friday night, June 16, 1916, when 52 men were sworn in by Capt. J. H. Bland, naval secretary to Gov. Park Trammel, and became part of the

Third Division, First Battalion, Florida Naval Militia. Many of the men had started drilling two months earlier.

Headquarters for the naval unit were established in the Sarasota Yacht Club building on Gulf Stream Avenue and the naval militiamen began a rigorous course of training. As a result, the unit was ready to enter service within 48 hours after receiving a call. The men entrained for Charleston on Easter Sunday, April 15, 1917.

The personnel of the unit was: Lieut. Warren F. Purdy, Ensign John W. Philip, Gunners Mate 1st Class A. B. Keiserman, Yeoman 1st Class H. C. Grinton, Quartermaster 2nd Class Arthur R. Clark, Machinists Mate 2nd Class B. S. Olson; Coxwains, W. W. Liddell and R. E. Halton; Bugler Homer L. Hebb; Seamen 1st Class—P. R. Fatic, C. I. Hebb, W. C. Hodges, T. R. Martin, Jr., G. D. Maus, W. R. Roehr; Seamen 2nd Class—A. D. Albritton, L. K. Barber, W. A. Bispham, Ernest A. Bright, W. C. Bryan, E. Cooper, B. D. Drymon, R. E. Drymon, V. A. Drymon, Lewis G. Evers, J. F. Frost, C. W. Gaskill, H. C. Green, L. O. Hodges, J. G. James, Frank P. Lacey, J. K. Martin, C. C. McLeod, E. L. Parson, J. C. Pelot, C. E. Scott, W. Whitted, S. F. Williams, and E. S. Kraft; Seamen 3rd Class—I. V. Biorseth, R. E. Bradley, V. Hartman, H. Howard, C. C. Lacey, J. B. Lacey, C. D. May, F. A. Reigel, G. A. Willis, J. B. Martin, G. S. Clark, J. Gonzalez, C. Peacon, and George P. Hill. The unit served during the entire war and every man returned, uninjured.

At least two hundred more Sarasota men enlisted in the armed services or were inducted before the conflict ended. Only one, however, died in service—Horace Mink, of Tatum Ridge, who died May 28, 1918, of pneumonia at Camp Jackson, Columbia, S. C., a little over a month after he entered the army. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. William Mink.

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HORACE MINK

As a result of the war, Sarasota got its first airfield. It was located on Fruitville Road a mile east of the city limits to provide an emergency landing field for army airmen training at the Arcadia air base. To clear the field, Sarasota called a community work-day January 3, 1918, and everyone turned out. Machinery was furnished by contractors and the Palmer Corporation and before the day was over, the field was cleared and leveled. Hundreds of airplanes landed there during the following year. And the sight of airplanes in the sky ceased to be a novelty to Sarasotans.

*And Then Came Prohibition!*

The airfield was welcomed—but another end-result of the war was less favorably received by many. Prohibition—state-wide prohibition.

In theory, the Land of Sarasota always had been "dry." Manatee County, which included the present Sarasota County up until 1921, had voted dry way back yonder—no one remembers the year. That's probably because prohibition existed in name only.

In the early years, bountiful supplies of Cuban rum were brought here by traders. Alex Browning asserted in his memoirs that the traders swapped liquor for chickens, hogs, sweet potatoes—and even Eagle Brand condensed milk. The Cubans valued Eagle Brand so highly, Browning said, that in exchange for a case of it they would give a 30-gallon barrel of the best grade rum.

Bourbon and rye were brought here from Cedar Keys and later on, from Tampa, by schooners and steamers. For persons who could not afford such expensive beverages, which cost as much as 75 cents for a 32-ounce quart, there was always Sarasota "dynamite"—a home-distilled product which, 'tis said, was strong enough to take the hair off a razorback hog.

The church people of Sarasota—and particularly members of the Women's Christian Temperance Union—for years insisted that the county's dry laws should be enforced. If Demon Rum would be banned, they declared, over and over again, crime would end—and Sarasota would become as pure as a newborn babe.

It was natural, therefore, that when the time came for Florida to approve or reject the "noble experiment," the members of the W.C.T.U. and their friends campaigned vigorously. The women couldn't vote—but they could talk! And talk they did. So convincingly that the dry amendment was approved by Sarasota voters, November 4, 1918—58 to 21.

When the 18th amendment went into effect, and federal liquor sleuths began running down rumrunners, the makers of Sarasota dynamite reaped a harvest. Old timers declare there was a still in every hammock and on every bayhead. As a result, there was never a noticeable decrease in the quantity of liquor here—just a drop in quality. And a terrific increase in price.

During the Big Boom, bootleggers thrived. Some made fortunes. Federal and state prohibition men often worked in cahoots with the law breakers. For a consideration, of course. Crime increased, instead of decreasing, because of the noble experiment.

Probably the final deathblow to local prohibition was given on Tuesday, October 10, 1933, when Sarasota voted 971 to 192 in favor of the

repeal of the 18th amendment. The state also went wet. Soon thereafter, beer, wine and more potent beverages could be purchased legally and openly in stores operated by responsible people.

One big event of prohibition days will be long remembered. On October 10, 1925, Sheriff L. D. Hodges announced in the newspapers that he intended to arrest "the king of the bootleggers" within 24 hours. He did not say whom he was after. The Sarasota Herald reported, next day, that five hours after Hodges made his announcement, 18 men had left the city! In those days, Sarasota had a lot of kings.

## CHAPTER 10

### DURING THE TURBULENT TWENTIES

PREPOSTEROUS though it may seem, the Big Florida Boom probably was started by an assassin!

During the winter of 1913-14, the United States began to go into another economic tailspin. Venture capital began going into hiding. Factories began to close. Unemployment steadily increased. By the summer of 1914 almost everyone believed the country was headed for another dread depression.

Then, on St. Vitus Day, June 28, 1914, a Serb student, Gavrillo Princip, assassinated Archduke Francis of Austria and his wife in Sarjevo, Bosnia. His blazing gun provided the spark which exploded the European powderkeg. A month later, Russia troops invaded Germany and German troops invaded France. World War I had started!

Huge orders for munitions, clothing, food—everything needed by warring nations—began pouring into the United States. By late fall, business was booming. Factories were working overtime; anyone who wanted a job could find one. Wages soared. So did retail sales. Almost everyone prospered.

For nearly three years it appeared as though the United States could enjoy all the "benefits" of war without paying any penalties. But when Czar Nicholas of Russia abdicated, March 15, 1917, and his country ceased to be a factor in the conflict, the entrance of the United States into the war became inevitable—and war against Germany was declared just three weeks later.

Then came the era of billion dollar federal budgets. Huge government expenditures. \$3 wheat and \$1 corn. Farmers waxed rich. Factory workers piled up savings. Industrialists and financiers made millions. Bank deposits throughout the nation climbed to an all-time peak. The public's reservoir of capital was filled to overflowing.

For the first time in the nation's history, everyone—or almost everyone—had money to spend. Scads of money. The small fry splurged by buying \$14 shirts and \$5 meals. The "wise boys" plunged into the stock market and cleaned up as the price of securities soared. The "conservatives," wary of Wall Street, bought land, "the safest investment on earth."

More and more people now had money to travel. For years they had read about the Sunny South and glamorous Florida. Now they could venture forth and see what Florida really was like.

The beginning of the Big Boom was deceptively slow. In fact, hardly anyone realized a boom had started. But it most certainly had. Each winter the number of tourists increased, even after the United States entered the war and railroad traffic was snarled. The tourists came regardless. And then, after the armistice, the streams of tourists became a torrent—and soon a flood!

The first definite indication that a boom was in the making came in the fall of 1919 with the invasion of Florida by the Tin Can Tourists, as motley a caravan as the world had ever seen. Shiny limousines bumped fenders with dilapidated flivvers; sophisticated urbanites rubbed elbows with country "hicks." All roads leading south were crowded. Despite slippery, slithery mud and mountainous ruts, they came. They came!

Makeshift tourist camps sprang up almost overnight. Unsightly places, with rubbish thrown everywhere and almost non-existent toilet facilities. They were the best Florida had to offer—and many Florida

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Fishing is always good on the Ringling Causeway.

cities made no attempt to provide anything better. Many editors, with infinite dumbness, branded the Tin Canner as "an undesirable visitor." The editors were fooled by outward appearances. They believed the Tin Canner was poverty stricken, simply because he brought a tent, and bedding, and a stock of food. Not necessarily to save money but to make sure he would have a place to sleep and something to eat, regardless of where he went or what conditions he encountered.

The scoffers did not realize that thousands of Tin Canners carried fat rolls of bills and had healthy deposits in their banks back home. Plenty of money to buy all the Florida land they wanted. And they bought! In all parts of South Florida. But particularly in resort cities which welcomed their arrival.

The Tin Canners made up only one division of the invading tourist army. Other sun lovers came in palatial yachts, and in private railroad cars. Thousands of less affluent folks came by day coach and Pullman. Every south-bound train was packed solid. The railroads had to put on specials—and even then every berth was sold weeks in advance. Had there been airlines in those days, the skies would have been filled with planes.

The brief depression of 1921 affected Florida not at all! The tourists came regardless. And the winter of 1922-23 brought a record-breaking crowd. Every resort city was packed tight.

The invading tourists dumped millions and millions of dollars into Florida. Not only for food and lodging but for homes. And land on which they could build and thereby be sure of having a place to live. The Florida boom was on—in earnest!

The boom was accelerated by the magic of real estate profits. Thousands of tourists made enough money by buying lots one year and selling them the next, to pay all the expenses of their winter vacations. And plungers who bought business property, acreage, or blocks of lots in well-located subdivisions reaped golden harvests.

Returning north, they spread the word about the wonderland of Florida where fortunes could be made while basking in the sunshine. Like an epidemic, the "Florida fever" spread throughout the nation. Speculators, as well as tourists, began flocking here from every state. With them came an army of real estate salesmen, the "knickerbocker boys" of high-pressure fame—the whoopla lads who stopped at nothing to make sales.

Yes, the Florida boom was on—in all its fury!

But let's backtrack and see what Sarasota was doing in the days when the boom was just getting started.

*Preparing for Future Growth*

To the women of Sarasota goes most of the credit for making Sarasota beautiful enough to attract tourists—and hold them.

The Woman's Club took the lead in planting trees along the streets. During the summer of 1914, the club members planted more than 250 coconut trees along the waterfront and in Sunset Park. Then they persuaded the councilmen to appropriate money to plant 2,000 eucalyptus trees along the residential streets. Next, they sponsored a movement to beautify Five Points with a concrete fountain—and a fancy fountain it was.

The women of Sarasota also can be credited with pushing forward the program of laying sidewalks and hard-surfaced streets. By August, 1915, the street paving program was going ahead full steam. During that one month, 650 carloads of material were received, including a million paving brick and more than 2,000 tons of rock shell and asphalt.

Unfortunately, Sarasota had to sacrifice some of its beauty in the street improvement program. Towering oak trees, planted by the town founders in 1886, had to be cut down on lower Main Street in 1914 and on upper Main in 1920. Had they been allowed to stand, the principal street in the city could not have been more than 30 feet wide, due to the fact that the trees had been planted far out from the building line.

But what Sarasota lost in the destruction of the trees along Main Street it made up for in beautiful lawns and gardens. In almost every issue of the Sarasota Times, Mrs. C. V. S. Wilson echoed the Woman's Club plea to "plant grass and shrubs which bloom the whole year 'round."

Said Mrs. Wilson: "Here at hand are the means within reach of the poorest citizen to help attract and keep our winter visitors and give a substantial basis for residence values." How right she was!

With the boom in the making, but only dimly foreseeable, the men of Sarasota banded together to make sure that the nation wouldn't forget their city existed. On Wednesday night, November 15, 1916, they re-organized a hibernating Board of Trade and put new life into it.

At a big public rally, many new members joined the organization and money was raised to print 10,000 copies of a new city booklet—to cost all of \$1,000! But before you sniff, remember that was before the boom started and \$1,000 was still big money. The largest contributions for the booklet were made by A. C. Honore, Owen Burns and J. H. Lord. Officers elected to the rejuvenated board were: Lord, president; I. R. Burns, vice-president and treasurer, and Dr. Barney Low, secretary. John F. Burket, Owen Burns, Harry L. Higel and A. B. Edwards were elected to serve on the board of directors along with the officers.

The year 1916 was a memorable year for Sarasota in more ways than one. Among other things, it gave Sarasota a new "opera house"—the Virginia, now known as the Rex. It was opened with great pomp and ceremony Tuesday night, March 21, 1916, by the Sarasota Minstrels, an offshoot of the Sarasota Yacht and Automobile Club. Every one of the 800 seats in the opera house were taken and people jammed the aisles.

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Sarasota County Courthouse, as seen from Ringling Boulevard.

Members of the Minstrels who thrilled Sarasotans at the opening of the Virginia included: Dr. Jack Halton, Owen Burns, Hal Yohe, Jack Madison, Jr., Dr. Joe Halton, Frank Anthony, H. N. Hall, Edward Burns, E. M. Butler, Clark Mounts, Russell Thompson, John F. Burket, Carl Thompson, J. H. Barrett, Jake Chapline, O. W. Cordova and George Ross. Ladies who took part included: Mrs. J. B. Chapline, Mrs. E. M. Butler, Miss Louise Edwards, Mrs. Kate Belt, Mrs. Jack Halton, Mrs. R. C. Caples, Mrs. Brown, and Mrs. Mary E. Pickett.

The Virginia, built by B. D. Robinson, was leased to a movie chain and G. C. Koons came here as first manager. The first show was given Monday night, April 10, and the public was invited to attend free of charge. Needless to say, the theatre was packed. The main feature was the five-reel "Jimmy Valentine." As an extra added attraction, the first

installment of a nationally-known "thriller" was shown—"The Strange Case of Mary Page."

Came late fall of 1916 and the future looked so bright that J. H. Lord was inspired to write in the *Sarasota Times*: "Today is Florida's renaissance. Florida has swatted the sleeping bug and the hook worm. Dixie Highways and Tamiami Trails are sweeping the state as if by magic. Old towns are thrilling with new life and new towns are springing up on every hand. Drainage districts are making available the richest land in the world. And behold Sarasota! Venus Aphrodite, the patron goddess of Sarasota, is transforming this fishing village of yesterday into a modern city which, in three short years, has obtained municipal improvements which have been the despair of northern towns for a hundred years!"

Lord had ample reason for bragging. The town in which he had invested so heavily in 1903 truly was "blossoming like a rose," as he so often liked to say. In summing up the progress made in 1916, the *Sarasota Times* stated that more than \$500,000 had been spent in the city limits for new business blocks, fine residences, and street and sidewalk improvements. Also, that the sewerage system had been repaired in many places and put in first class condition. "Truly," said the *Times*, "Sarasota is moving forward with a vengeance!"

In boasting about Sarasota's progress, neither the *Times* nor Lord probably ever realized there was any connection between that progress and the Serb assassin whose blazing gun precipitated World War I—and thereby unwittingly changed the course of Florida's history.

Entrance of the United States into the war did not slow down Sarasota's growth perceptively. New residents kept coming in all during the war period and even during the darkest hours of early fall, 1918, the sound of carpenters' hammers could be heard as work continued on more homes and business buildings.

However, Sarasota did not escape its share of war hysteria. A company of Home Guards was formed to "guard the city" against German saboteurs! Just why any villainous German agent would have wanted to waste his time and precious explosives on a resort city is beyond comprehension. But Sarasotans organized, 90 strong, and the city was protected!

The hysteria reached a peak in March, 1918, when a movement was launched to destroy all pelicans "to protect the fish so badly needed for food." The pelican foes urged everyone to show his patriotism by shooting all the pelicans in sight. George "Nemo" Higel, always the champion of victims of injustice, leaped to the defense of the birds. "A porpoise eats more fish in a day than all the pelicans can eat in a year," he declared. But despite his protests, shooting of pelicans continued for several months—and hundreds were killed. As a result, the ungainly pelicans—what were

left of them—shunned Sarasota for years, much to the sorrow of winter visitors who formerly spent hours watching them make their clumsy but accurate dives into the water.

The war hysteria also took a religious turn. Big revival services were held by members of the "Holy Rollers" sect. To show the efficacy of prayer, fanatics in the sect announced that one of their members, Miss Marian Murray, would allow herself to be bitten by a rattlesnake—and they invited everyone in Sarasota to witness the demonstration, to be held on Lockwood Ridge, five miles from town. Many attended. Miss Murray picked up a five-foot rattler and shook it. Angered, the snake sunk its fangs in her forearm. Then, for ten minutes, the young woman walked around through the crowd, her face uplifted as though in a trance. Finally, she collapsed and was taken into the Robert Mixson home. Nothing was done to alleviate her suffering but members of the sect loudly sang hymns—and they were still hymning six hours later, when she died.

The dread flu epidemic of 1918 hit Sarasota early in October. By the middle of the month, so many cases had been reported that Mayor G. W. Franklin on October 17 issued orders for the immediate closing of all schools, theatres, churches and other meeting places. Three deaths were reported up to October 24. Then the epidemic subsided and the ban on meetings was lifted Sunday, November 3.

A few days later, on November 8, Sarasota celebrated long and joyously when word was received that the Germans had signed an armistice. Even when highest government officials declared that the report was a newspaperman's blunder, the celebration continued, far into the night. When the real armistice came on November 11, the city celebrated again but in a more restrained manner.

A year later, on the first anniversary of Armistice Day, Sarasota had the biggest celebration in its history. All the veterans took part and the city was thronged with people from all parts of the county. Following a parade, the crowd assembled at the flag pole—erected at the Five Points in the summer of 1917 to honor Sarasota's servicemen. Speeches were made by Congressman Herbert J. Drane, American Legion Post Commander A. L. Joiner, W. Y. Perry, Rev. A. J. Beck and Mayor G. W. Franklin. A basket picnic was held and in the afternoon the crowd went to the golf course for a program of athletic events. At night, a street dance was held on lower Main Street.

As a memorial to the war veterans, members of the Woman's Club planted 181 water oaks early in March, 1919, on Main Street from Orange Avenue east to the city limits. Three years later, on July 22, 1922, this section of Main Street with its memorial trees was officially named Victory Avenue. Members of the Sarasota Bay Post of the American Legion and

hundreds of citizens, led by the Sarasota County Band, marched out to the end of the avenue and back to the school house where impressive services were held. Principal speakers were Mrs. F. H. Guenther, Lewis Combs, Dr. Jack Halton, Mayor E. J. Bacon, A. B. Edwards and Rev. C. W. Latham.

*After the War Clouds Passed*

The last bar to the rapid development of Sarasota was removed when travel restrictions were lifted during the winter following the armistice. From then on, the city zipped ahead, at a faster and faster pace.

Definite proof that Sarasota had acquired a new realization of the need for aggressive action, if the city's growth was to continue, was provided Monday, December 23, 1918. On that day, the voters approved an \$80,000 bond issue to purchase the electric light plant of the Sarasota Ice & Electric Co. and install a municipal plant.

The outcome of the voting was never in doubt. For years, Sarasota had been furnished abominable electric service. The company complained that it was losing money—but it refused for years to put in enough equipment so that the current could be turned on 24 hours a day, and thereby make possible the wide use of motors and appliances. It wouldn't even provide all night service until November 1, 1916.

In disgust, the citizens began demanding municipal ownership of the plant, not because they were socialistically inclined but because they saw no other way of obtaining satisfactory service. So, when the \$80,000 bond issue came up for approval or rejection, it passed by nearly a four to one vote.

The company's light plant was purchased on June 20, 1919, for \$27,500 and the city went into the electric business. On November 26, 1919, another bond issue of \$35,000 was approved to complete equipping the city's plant and extend the electric lines. Work on the power plant was completed January 15, 1920. Its operation was supervised by a newly-created board of public works appointed by city council. Its members were S. H. Highsmith, J. E. Battle and J. D. Hazen.

The city's municipal plant provided all the current Sarasota needed—until the boom reached its peak. Hardware stores did a landoffice business selling electric stoves, refrigerators, fans and other electrical appliances. There was even enough current for installing white way lights on Main Street during the week of October 7, 1922. The sleepy little fishing village of two decades before was gone forever—Sarasota now stood out, even at night, as a progressive, modern city.

*Sarasota County Is Created*

The Land of Sarasota threw off its shackles in 1921, stepped out of the "bondage" of Manatee County, and became a county in its own right—Sarasota County.

The division movement had been growing stronger year by year. The first talk of breaking the Manatee bonds was heard in 1914 when Sarasota's good road boosters pleaded in vain with Manatee County commissioners for better highways in the Sarasota district.

To get the roads they needed, the people living in Sarasota, Osprey and Venice had to band together and form a road and bridge district of their own. But that did not solve all of Sarasota's problems. The Manatee County commissioners dilly-dallied in making necessary improvements on the woebe-gone Sarasota-Bradenton road and almost every time a Sarasotan had to go to the county seat at Bradenton he blew out a tire or got stuck in mud or sand.

The people of Sarasota had other complaints—many of them. For one thing, they insisted the southern part of Manatee County wasn't being provided with all the schools it needed. They also charged that their taxes were far too high, considering the failure of the county to provide the public improvements the Sarasota district needed.

"We're being taxed to death and we're getting practically nothing in return," declared Owen Burns, one of the most ardent divisionists. "We're being treated just like a step child. The people in the Manatee River region have had their own way long enough—the time has come for us to become independent and chart our own course."

Rapidly the separation movement gained strength. And then, on Wednesday night, June 16, 1920, a mass meeting was held in the Palmer office on North Pineapple Avenue. About 35 citizens from all parts of the county answered a call sent out by Mayor A. B. Edwards. J. E. Battle was elected chairman and Russell Thompson, secretary.

Fiery speeches were made by John F. Burket, A. L. Joiner, Owen Burns, Dr. Joseph Halton, and many others. All pointed out how Manatee County had neglected the Sarasota district in the past. And all insisted that vitally needed improvements could be obtained only by the creation of a new county. Everyone was convinced that only by separation could progress be assured.

A general committee was named to carry out the new county drive. Its members were Mayor Edwards, Frank A. Walpole, John F. Burket, A. M. Wilson, J. H. Lord, Owen Burns, A. L. Joiner, L. L. May, John Savarese, W. Y. Perry, George B. Prime, W. M. Tuttle, Frank Redd, Clarence Hitchings, A. C. Honore, Frank Pearce, Dr. Joseph Halton, and E. O. Burns, of Sarasota; W. L. Dunn, of Nokomis; W. E. Stephens,

Venice; J. R. Mason, Manasota; P. E. Buchan, Englewood; Vic Saunders, Osprey; Bryant Taylor, Bee Ridge; Emmet Tucker, Fruitville; Will Hancock, Myakka; F. P. Dean, Indian Beach, and John A. Graham, of Bradenton.

All the above men deserve credit for the ultimate success of the new county drive. But a lion's share of the credit goes to Frank A. Walpole, a comparative newcomer to Sarasota.

Born in Mississippi, Walpole was nursed on printers' ink and when he became knee high to a grasshopper, started in the newspaper business. He worked his way up from a copy boy and cub reporter until he finally became owner and editor of the Tampa Herald. Selling out after the paper was well established, Walpole next started papers in Palmetto and Manatee—his Manatee Record long was one of the most influential papers in the county. He became known throughout Florida as the "fiery, red-headed editor."

Branching out into another field, Walpole entered the drug store business in 1912 and bought a store in Manatee. Soon afterward, he bought the old Fred Knight drug store, in Sarasota, established in 1904. Then, in 1916, he moved here with his family and almost immediately became one of Sarasota's civic leaders.

Soon after the state legislature met in 1921, efforts were made to get the Sarasota County bill introduced in the house or senate. But the representative from Manatee County refused to support it, because of opposition to it in the Manatee River section. The senator from this district was sympathetic but "cautious." It looked as though the Sarasotans were out of luck.

But then Walpole, ably assisted by Burket and several other men, began to "play politics." A deal was made with a prominent politician from the northern part of the county whereby a juicy political plum was pledged in exchange for badly needed support. More skillful maneuvering was done and finally all opposition to the bill was smothered. The measure was introduced in the legislature and went through a'sailing, without one vote against it, on May 11. Burket, who had been in Tallahassee with Walpole and Edwards, wired the good news to Mrs. C. V. S. Wilson, publisher of the Sarasota Times. Governor Cary A. Hardee signed the bill on May 14, and handed the pen he used to Walpole. It is still a prized possession of the Walpole family.

An election was called for June 15, 1921, to ratify or reject the new county bill. Many persons were dissatisfied because the division committee had to yield four townships just northeast of the present Sarasota County lines to Manatee in a compromise arrangement. But, despite this dissatisfaction, the new county lines recommended by the committee

were accepted by the general public and, at the referendum election, the bill creating the new county was approved by an overwhelming majority, 518 to 154.

The new county of Sarasota was born! To celebrate the occasion, Mrs. Wilson changed the masthead of her Sarasota Times to read "The Sarasota County Times" with the issue of June 16, 1921. She was happy! In her paper she had argued for months with separation opponents, trying to make them see the light—and now she had won her fight!

Officials of the new county, to become an actuality on July 1, 1921, were appointed by Governor Hardee. They were: county commissioners—Frank A. Walpole, District No. 1; L. L. May, No. 2; F. J. Hayden, No. 3; P. E. Buchan, No. 4, and Henry Hancock, No. 5. School board members: A. L. Joiner, first district; T. L. Livermore, second district, and Guy Ragan, third district. Others were: W. Y. Perry, county judge; O. E. Roesch, clerk of circuit court; A. M. Wilson, tax collector; B. D.

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Levi, sheriff; Frank Redd, prosecuting attorney; T. W. Yarbrough, superintendent of public instruction, and T. A. Hughes, supervisor of registration. Later, A. B. Edwards was appointed to serve as the county's first tax assessor.

Arrangements for obtaining quarters for the county offices were made at the first meeting of the county commissioners July 3, 1921. Space in the Arcade Building, owned by the city, was rented. The commissioners also ordered necessary equipment, record books and forms.

During the next few years, the grand jury repeatedly pointed out that the county quarters in the arcade were inadequate and urged the commissioners to take immediate steps to protect the public records from fire hazards. Finally, in 1925, the state legislature authorized a county bond issue of \$500,000 to erect a new courthouse.

While plans for the structure were being drawn by James Dwight Baum, the offices were moved to a temporary wooden "courthouse" erected at a cost of \$11,000 on Oak Street near Orange Avenue, on a lot owned by County Commissioner M. L. Wread.

The cornerstone of the new courthouse on Main Street, widely praised as one of the most artistic public buildings in the United States, was laid May 13, 1926, by the Sarasota Lodge No. 147 F. & A. M. Nearly a hundred members of the lodge participated in the ceremonies. Talks were made by County Commissioners George B. Prime and M. L. Townsend, and by Judge Cary B. Fish, district deputy grand master of the grand lodge of Florida. The courthouse was built by Stephenson & Cameron, New York contracting firm, and formally accepted February 24, 1927. Some of the offices had been moved into the building several months before.

### *A Murderer Strikes*

Early on the morning of Thursday, January 6, 1921, the body of a man was seen lying in a pool of blood near the center of Beach Road on Siesta Key by Bert Luzier and his son Merle. The man's face and head had been horribly crushed but he was still living, unconscious but moaning feebly.

The Luziers picked up the body and put it in their car, and then rushed to Sarasota. A physician was called. It was obvious that the man's condition was critical. The doctor gave orders for him to be taken to Tampa, where he could be treated in a hospital. The man died on the road to Bradenton.

Just before the trip to Tampa started, the man was identified through a seal ring he was wearing. He was Harry L. Higel, one of Sarasota's most beloved and respected citizens! A man who had served the community five terms as councilman and three terms as mayor—a man who had been

identified with every progressive movement in the city's history.

Sarasota was stunned. And shocked. And then bitterly angry. A cry went up to catch the murderer—and string him up!

Suspicion centered on Rube Allyn, former editor of the Sarasota Sun. The circumstantial evidence against him appeared incontrovertible. He had been quarreling with Higel since a bitter election campaign in 1915. He was known to have a violent temper. A footprint which looked as though it had been made by one of his rubber-soled canvas shoes was found at the place the murderous assault occurred.

Placed under arrest, Allyn was brought to Sarasota from his home on Siesta Key. A mob began gathering. A rope was hurriedly secured and a hangman's knot drawn. However, before the mob took the law into its own hands, the sheriff appeared and whisked Allyn away to Bradenton. A coroner's jury ordered him held on a charge of murder.

Allyn was held in jail in Bradenton for 61 days. Then the grand jury decided that a true bill could not be returned against him, inasmuch as all the evidence against him was circumstantial. So Allyn was released. In recent years, Allyn has lived as a hermit in a small home near Ruskin.

Funeral services for Higel were the most impressive ever held in Sarasota. Hundreds of his friends attended. Antinarelli's band, playing a funeral dirge, led the procession from his home to Rosemary Cemetery, where the body was buried.

The murderer of Higel never paid the penalty for his crime. A reward of \$1,000 was offered by the county commissioners, immediately after Sarasota County was created, for sufficient evidence to obtain a conviction. But no new evidence was forthcoming. A plaque honoring Higel was placed on Siesta Bridge.

### *A Hurricane Cleans the Waterfront*

For many years, Sarasota's growth as a winter resort was retarded by an unsightly waterfront, littered with rickety wharves and tumble-down fish houses.

The city recognized the value and the need of the fishing industry, but it did not believe the industry had to settle down for keeps in the city's "front yard." The fishermen agreed that their wharves, warehouses, and nets were unsightly but they argued that they had no other place to go—no place where there was a harbor and railroad.

The problem seemed unsolvable. But then one of Sarasota's winter visitors offered a solution—Calvin N. Payne, of Titusville, Pa., one of the nation's best known and most widely respected oil men. He bought seven acres of land at the mouth of Hog Creek and said he would dredge out a basin, construct bulkheads and docks, and see that a railroad siding was

provided. He said he would turn over the terminal to the city without a cent of profit—providing the city wanted it and also providing the fishermen would agree to move to the new location.

The whole project was still hanging fire when a hurricane hit Sarasota—one of the worst hurricanes in the history of the Florida West Coast.

The storm started with a slow rain Saturday afternoon, October 22, 1921. By Sunday morning the slow rain had become a downpour which continued hour after hour without letup. Then, at 9 p.m. Monday, winds of hurricane strength, coming out of the southwest, hit the city. The wind moaned and howled—and water kept piling into the bay, flooding the waterfront.

In the city, the hurricane did little damage—but it wreaked havoc down on the bayfront. First the small boat houses began breaking up. Then the railroad dock began to disintegrate, and the wholesale fish house of John Savarese was destroyed. After that, in rapid succession, went the other fish houses, and many fishing boats and launches, and thousands of dollars worth of nets. A large part of the municipal pier was washed away—and all the other docks.

When the storm passed, late Tuesday, the waterfront was a shambles. Gulf Stream Avenue was covered with debris. But the storm, destructive though it was, served one constructive purpose. It took the fishing industry out of the city's front yard, once and forever.

Payne speeded up the work of dredging the basin at Hog Creek. A spur track from the Seaboard was laid down to the newly built docks. And within a few months, a new and better place for the fishermen was finished and ready for use—thanks to the winter resident from Titusville, Pa., who had fallen in love with Sarasota and was determined to do his part to make it an even finer place in which to live.

A \$60,000 bond issue to reimburse Payne for the money he had spent on the new harbor and railroad tracks was approved 73 to 57 at an election held February 20, 1923. So the terminal became city property. To honor the man who advanced the money for its development, city council called it the Payne Terminal.

The hurricane, in "cleaning-up" the waterfront, convinced the city fathers that it was about time to build a storm-proof, concrete municipal pier to replace the wooden structure which the raging winds and high tide had sadly demolished.

A \$75,000 bond issue for constructing a 700-foot concrete pier was approved 129 to 30 at an election held Monday, July 3, 1922. In the bond ordinance, it was plainly stated that the pier was to be "purely recreational"—the city was determined it shouldn't be used for warehouses,

fish houses, machine shops, and "amusement palaces" as the old pier had been.

A contract for the construction of the pier was let July 24 to George Skene, of Palmetto. But delays were encountered in selling the bonds—John Ringling finally came to the city's aid and took \$70,000 worth of the bonds at par, a higher price than had been offered by any other bidder. After the bonds were sold, Skene got into difficulty because of the rapidly rising cost of labor and materials and the pier wasn't finished until late in the winter of 1923-24. It was dedicated March 26, 1924, with 2,000 persons attending. J. H. Lord was the principal speaker. Music was furnished by the Kiwanis band. The ceremonies were climaxed by a big fireworks display.

### *Another Scotsman Comes to Sarasota*

The Land of Sarasota for sixty years and more has had a close affinity with Scotland and the Scots.

It was in Edinburgh where the town plat of Sarasota first was drawn, under orders of Scotsman Sir John Gillespie, of Moffat, Dumfriesshire, head of the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co., Ltd. The group of Britishers who came to colonize the newly-platted town of Sarasota was composed almost entirely of Scotsmen. And the man who was Sarasota's No. 1 citizen for nearly three decades was Scotsman J. Hamilton Gillespie, son of Sir John.

To still another Scotsman goes the credit for giving Sarasota its first modern apartment building, and hotel, and auditorium. This Scotsman was Andrew McAnsh.

McAnsh did not come here directly from Scotland, as did the colonists and Gillespie, but from Chicago where he had grown to manhood and accumulated a fortune. He was induced to come here by W. C. Towles, of R. G. Dunn & Co., who had wintered in Sarasota for many years—and realized the city's need for a better hotel than the ancient Belle Haven.

"You Scotsmen put Sarasota on the map—now it's time for you to give it a first-rate hotel," Towles said to McAnsh. "And, besides, you can make some real money in Sarasota—the people will do almost anything to get a real hotel built."

McAnsh knew the Palmers had invested heavily in Sarasota and he finally decided to see for himself what Sarasota had to offer. He came here for the first time in the spring of 1922 and went into a huddle with Mayor E. J. Bacon, City Attorney John F. Burket, council members, and officials of the Chamber of Commerce. The upshot of the discussion was that the city agreed that if McAnsh would build a hotel, an apartment

building and a "nautitorium," it would not levy any taxes on the properties for ten years—and would give free light and water to boot.

Such an offer could not be resisted by a canny Scotsman. He went back to Chicago and formed the Mira Mar Corporation, stock in which was purchased by William D. Foreman, William K. Schmidt, Charles Koepke, John Smulski, W. C. Towles, Sherburne Erling, and R. C. Caples.

With the company organized, McAnsh purchased several large lots on Palm Avenue and ordered work started at once on the Mira Mar Apartments. Ground was broken October 6, 1922. Sarasotans then witnessed the speediest construction job in the city's history. Electric lights flooded the building site and work proceeded on a 24-hour-a-day basis. The project was called the "60-day-wonder." By early December the apartment was finished and by January 1 it was ready for occupancy.

Just before the new apartment building was completed, McAnsh returned to Sarasota after a trip back to Chicago. He was given a truly royal reception. His train was met at Rubonia by a delegation of leading Sarasota citizens headed by Mayor Bacon and A. B. Edwards, then president of the Chamber of Commerce. A parade toward Sarasota began.

It was met on the outskirts of the city by a brass band which blared forth a welcome which could be heard for miles. Then, as the parade reached Main Street, red flares were lit on both sides of the street—the fire siren shrieked and whistles blew. On that night of Tuesday, November 28, 1922, McAnsh was the hero of the hour in Sarasota.

Work on the Mira Mar Hotel was started in July, 1923, and completed within six months. At the same time, the Mira Mar Auditorium was constructed—everyone agreed that an auditorium was more badly needed than a "nautitorium," desirable though such a place might be. The auditorium, which seated 1,200, was a famous meeting place for years.

Construction of the Mira Mar buildings by McAnsh and his associates marked a turning point in Sarasota's history.

From then on, inducements did not have to be made by the city council to bring venture capital into the city. Money literally poured in—to construct more apartment buildings, more hotels, more business blocks, and hundreds of homes. And, oh yes, to open and develop new subdivisions. The city grew as it had never grown before. The golden age of Sarasota had begun. The boom was on!

### *Skyward Go the Prices!*

Sarasota went real estate crazy during the winter of 1922-23. Stark, raving mad! Just like other resort cities of the state! They all became insane. And for three years the insanity became worse and worse.

The Florida boom was a phenomenon which is hardly comprehensible to anyone who didn't live through it. A child of war-made wealth, it became an incoporeal Frankenstein which brought financial ruin to almost everyone it seemed to favor most. Or, to use another metaphor, it was an insidious disease, spread by the germ of quick and easy profits. A disease which swept the state like an epidemic, afflicting the foolish and the wise, the gullible suckers and the most astute financial wizards. Hardly anyone was immune.

Unlike most diseases, the Florida boom was very, very pleasant—for a time. It affected its victims like strong wine. It exhilarated them, and made them gay and happy. And put gorgeous rolls of bills into their pockets. When the disease became virulent, the whole state acted as though it were on a glorious bender—beautifully intoxicated. And wildly hysterical.

Here in Sarasota, the disease was mild, in the beginning, and few persons were affected. In fact, hardly anyone knew such a disease existed. But let's trace its course.

When the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co., Ltd., platted the town and put the first lots on the market in 1886, "business sites" on lower Main were priced at \$100 each. But there were few buyers. And soon the prices plummeted. As late as 1900 lots on lower Main could be purchased for \$40—with just a few dollars down and the balance on almost any terms the buyer wanted. Residential lots, a block or so from Five Points, were sold at \$10.

With the coming of the Seaboard and J. H. Lord, the land buyer, prices rose "tremendously." Lord was forced to pay all of \$800 for the "triangle," bounded by Central, Pineapple and Seventh—and \$3,000 for the northeast corner of Main and Central, where the Palmer Bank Building and Lord's Arcade now stand. He also got the Sarasota House for that \$3,000—the second largest hotel in town, so perhaps he wasn't so badly cheated.

At that time, prices of vacant business lots on Main leaped up to \$100 each and residential lots to \$25 and even \$50. And the choicest waterfront lots, 100 feet wide and 200 feet deep, shot up to \$200!

But after this brief upsurge of prices, real estate again went begging until after the coming of the Palmers. And, soon afterward, the Ringlings. By 1912, business lots on Main, between the bay and the Five Points, had risen to \$750—and from Pineapple to Lemon on Main, as high as \$500.

In 1913, there was a sharp advance in values. Owen Burns began selling his newly developed Sunset Park and asked as much as \$3,000 for bayfront lots. He didn't sell many at that figure—but he found enough buyers to keep his dredge working. Mrs. Potter Palmer also opened the

Boulevard addition, in the northern part of town, and A. B. Edwards opened the Hudson Bayou addition, just north of the bayou. For lots on the waterfront, Edwards charged \$300; inside lots were priced at \$150 to \$200.

During the same year, 1913, Harry L. Higel pushed his dream town of Siesta, out on Siesta Key, and Indian Beach came to life again. Large blocks of property there were purchased by J. K. Murphy and H. F. Reils, who formed the Indian Beach Land Co., and launched a nation-wide sales campaign. Many lots were sold at prices ranging from \$300 to \$2,000.

All these subdivisions and developments were stifled by the 1914 depression. However, they revived when the depression was routed by World War I and the United States was flooded by war orders. During the summer of 1915 and the following winter, McClellan Park was developed by Misses Katherine and Daisy McClellan, of Northampton, Mass. A yacht basin was dredged, boulevards and driveways opened, and a small club house constructed. The development was formally opened March 7, 1916. The occasion was featured by a tennis tournament. The players were Miss Louise Edwards, Miss Louise Higel, Mrs. Howard Nutt and Mrs. H. N. Hall.

John Ringling entered the real estate picture in Sarasota in 1917, first buying the club house and grounds of the Sarasota Yacht and Automobile Club, on Gulf Stream Avenue, and then Cedar Point, with 1200 foot frontage on the bay. Soon after the war ended, he also bought Bird Key, where the Worcester home was located; St. Armand's Key, Coon Key, Otter Key, Wolf Key, and several other unnamed mangrove islands. He thereby became the owner of all the keys between the bay and the gulf immediately in front of the city of Sarasota. Owen Burns acted as the agent of Ringling in acquiring most of these properties.

During 1921, the civic eye-sore at Five Points—a debris-filled lot where the town meeting place was once located—was removed when A. E. Cummer of Cleveland built a modern store building on the site. The building was leased to Phil H. Levy who operated a store there for many years.

From the end of the war up to the winter of 1922-23, there was a slow but steady rise in realty values. Nothing spectacular—just an increase justified by the city's healthy growth.

But then the fireworks started. Here, there, and everywhere, new subdivisions sprang up, like mushrooms in a sheep pasture after a warm spring rain. Prices of lots began shooting up to fantastic heights. Tremendous profits were made. Sarasota began to be swamped by real estate salesmen—the "knickerbocker army." Practically everyone became real estate crazy.

Enduring proof of the hysteria which swept Sarasota during the peak of the boom is provided by an eight-page, newspaper size ballyhoo paper published May 1, 1925, by an organization of rabid Sarasota boosters. The paper, widely circulated, was called "Sarasota On the Gulf." Here are some choice quotations from the paper:

"Fortunes have been made overnight in this territory. In a recent deal at Woodmere a real estate operator made \$700,000 profit on an 8000-acre deal in less than three months. A year ago the Watrous Hotel was held at \$65,000. It was sold last month for \$225,000. . . . On August 2, 1924, Frank Walpole paid \$1,000 a front foot for Main street property, a top price. Two months later, he paid \$2,000 a front foot for adjoining property. Recently the price jumped to \$3,000. . . .

"S. Davis Boylston, Sarasota druggist, netted \$36,000 profit in two weeks on an initial investment of \$500. J. H. Lord declined \$1,366,000 for a 99-year lease on the triangular lot at Five Points. I. R. Burns returned from Honolulu to find property he sold five years ago for \$30,000 had been sold for \$150,000 and has a present value of \$300,000. . . .

"Jim Bishop, a fisherman, who preempted a spot for a home on Longboat Key need not fish any more. He got \$30,000 cash for his holdings. Walter Blackburn had a farm of 200 acres near Laurel but a \$200,000 offer was tempting and he took it. Less than 10 acres of the farm was in cultivation. Senator Park Trammell made a profit of over \$10,000 on an initial investment of \$750."

Scores of other examples of phenomenal profits were listed in the paper as proof of Sarasota's "sound" growth. It was stated that real estate prices had merely begun to climb. Optimistically the publishers declared that within five years prevailing prices would seem ridiculously low.

By the fall of 1925, Sarasota had boomed so thoroughly that hardly anyone knew where all the subdivisions were located. Consequently, the Sarasota Realty Board decided to publish an atlas to list all the developments, and started looking for an expert atlas compiler to do the work.

In a hoop-la dissertation, Willis B. Powell, then secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, declared that the entire Florida boom was due directly to an advertising campaign which Sarasota had conducted during the last half of 1923. Said Powell: "Within a year after the campaign started, land that had gone begging at from \$25 to \$100 an acre took on a new lustre and was readily snapped up at from \$3,000 to \$5,000 an acre. Fortunes were made overnight. Widows and orphans, land poor, began to buy self-playing pianos and automobiles with jeweled mud guards. . . . Then other towns said, 'What Sarasota has done, we can do!' and they

began to step heavily on the loud pedal. By the spring of 1925, the whole state was thriving—thanks to Sarasota.”

Here are a few of the real estate developments which carried full page ads in the Sarasota Herald late in 1925: Washington Heights, “where prices positively will advance \$500 to \$1,000 a lot within a week;” Flora Terrace, on Tamiami Trail, “where values inevitably will soar because of the unsurpassed beauty of this marvelous tract of land;” East Sarasota, “a city in the making—invest \$1,000 now and you will make \$5,000 within a year;” the Garden of Allah, where “you’ll marvel at such reasonable prices—lots can still be bought as low as \$1,500—they will treble in value when development work starts;” Sorrento Shores, “only nine miles south of the Flagpole.”

Vamo, “the gem of the bay,” had a special ten-page section to tell of its attractions; Homasassa, “the miracle city,” had a four-page section. Other developments which ran full-page ads included Venice-Nokomis, then being sold by the Roger C. Rice Co.; Edgemere, beyond Bee Ridge; Mira Mar Extension, on Sarasota Beach; Seagate, “Sarasota’s most aristocratic suburb, a half mile north of Sapphire Shores,” and Pine Vista Estates, “only 20 minutes from Five Points, where beautiful home sites can be purchased at the ridiculously low price of \$3,650.”

The once tiny fishing hamlet was truly becoming a “marvelous metropolis.” Everyone was convinced that the city would continue to grow, and grow and grow. And to prepare for the great city almost in sight, the council was urged to petition the state legislature for a “greater Sarasota charter.”

City Attorney John F. Burket drafted the charter desired and hastened to Tallahassee. The charter was speeded through the legislature and signed by the governor on November 22, 1925. It extended the city limits far up and down the coast and many miles inland. The new corporate limits embraced 69 square miles—the original town was less than two square miles in size.

To celebrate the creation of Greater Sarasota, more than a thousand persons gathered on the city pier and cheered speeches by Mayor E. J. Bacon, Jules Brazil, E. A. Smith and John F. Burket.

Even before the passage of the Greater Sarasota charter, Sarasota had expanded to take in Sarasota Heights, once known as Bungalow Hill, which had been incorporated as a separate town by the state legislators on May 22, 1917. Dr. F. W. Schultz was elected mayor. Sarasotans accused the people in the Heights of being “tax dodgers” and unsuccessfully fought the incorporation in the courts. Finally, in the spring of 1925, the “Bungalow Hillers” decided that the advantages of being part of Sarasota outweighed the disadvantages so they did not object when the legislature

authorized the city to extend its corporate limits to take in the Heights. The act provided that the Heights' mayor at that time, J. W. Harvey, was to serve as one of Sarasota's councilmen.

During the month of October, 1925, real estate sales in Sarasota totalled \$11,420,000. No one realized it then, but that was the peak of the boom. In November, the sales dropped to \$10,000,000 and in December to \$8,000,000. Then, in January, 1926, they totalled only \$6,826,000.

The cold weather that winter was held responsible. Said the people: "This is just a temporary lull—wait until we get some good warm sunshine again and then see what happens!"

Late in January, the bad weather ended and the sun blazed forth in all its glory. Sales picked up. Chortled the optimists: "What did we tell you! From now on, Sarasota property is going to sell like it never sold before!" It looked for a time as though they were right, particularly after Ringling Estates were opened for sales.

This multi-million dollar development was a John Ringling project. It was one of the best planned in all Florida. Work on it was started late in 1923 and continued throughout 1924 and 1925. Three large dredges

Photo  
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Ca' d' Zan, the million dollar Sarasota home of the late John Ringling, was willed to the State of Florida when the circus magnate died. After years of litigation, executors of the estate deeded the residence to the state in 1946. The home has been described as the most palatial on the entire Florida West Coast.

were used to build up the mangrove islands and make solid land. The appearance of Cedar Point, St. Armand's, Lido, and the southern end of Longboat Key was entirely changed. Millions of cubic yards of fill were made; statuary bought in Italy was placed along the boulevards; thousands of coconut palms and Australian pines were planted. Sewer and water mains were installed; roads were hard-surfaced, and canals dredged. A bathing pavilion was built at Lido by Ringling and S. W. Gumpertz.

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Summer spends the winter at Lido Beach.

To connect Lido and St. Armand's with the mainland, Ringling built the causeway which now bears his name. The first concrete pile was driven to bedrock on the Sarasota side of the bay on January 1, 1925, and Ringling drove over the bridges just one year later. The causeway was opened to the public February 7, 1926. Ringling presented it to the city as a gift June 13, 1927, and it was accepted on January 31, 1928. At that time it was stated the causeway cost \$750,000.

On the day the causeway was formally opened, February 7, 1926, Ringling Estates also were opened to the public with the Czecho-Slovakian Band playing two concerts on St. Armands. It was reported that sales on the opening day exceeded a million dollars—probably this total included “pre-opening” sales made to prospects who had been taken to the islands, before the causeway was completed, in rowboats and launches.

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The John and Mable Ringling Art Museum, one of Sarasota's most famous attractions. The museum and the art objects it contains, conservatively valued at \$15,000,000, were willed to the state by the late John Ringling.

Ringling Estates were widely advertised throughout the state and brought many people to Sarasota for their first visits.

To make the islands still more attractive, John Ringling conceived the idea of building a super-de luxe hotel on the south end of Longboat Key. And to get a name which would be appropriate for the elegant hospitality, he agreed to pay \$5,000 a year, 'tis said, for the use of the name Ritz-Carlton. The building was started Monday, March 15, 1926. While work on it progressed, an 18-hole golf course, paid for by local subscriptions, was built on adjoining land. Today, few traces of the course remain and the hotel, on which \$650,000 was spent, stands unfinished.

But to get back to 1926. When the Ritz-Carlton was started, A. S. Skinner ballyhooed the attractions of Longboat Shores, a little north of the hotel. He announced that there were only 1056 lots in the development, ranging in price from \$2,000 to \$10,000, and he solemnly declared that when they were sold "there wouldn't be any more."

Longboat Shores almost died a'borning but that also was the case with several other developments on which immense sums were spent in 1925 and early 1926. Foremost among these was Whitfield Estates, just north of the county line but considered a part of Sarasota; Sapphire Shores, on Indian Beach, developed by the Bryson Realty Co., of which W. J. Bryson was president; Cherokee Park, developed by J. C. Brown, of Providence, R. I., and Courthouse Addition, developed by Charles Ringling.

This last development was one of the most notable carried out in the corporate limits of Sarasota. It took in the old Gillespie golf course, which Ringling purchased from the Sarasota Golf Holding Co. A business section was laid out and a number of business buildings erected. Also, the Sarasota Terrace Hotel, financed by the Adair Realty & Trust Co., of Atlanta, Ga. The hotel was officially opened June 24, 1926.

The boom gave Sarasota two other first class hotels. The first was the Sarasota Hotel, at Main and Palm, built by W. H. Pipcorn, of Milwaukee, the first man to pay \$1,000 a front foot for land in the business section. The hotel was started in 1924 and opened early in 1925. It was Sarasota's first skyscraper.

Then came the El Vernona Hotel, now known as the John Ringling Hotel. This structure, designed by Architect J. Dwight Baum, was described by experts as "the most perfect example of Spanish architecture in Florida." The builder of the hotel was Owen Burns, who named it in honor of his wife, the former Miss Vernona Hill Freeman, of New York. The hotel was formally opened with a grand ball and celebration New Year's eve, December 31, 1926.

Two other skyscrapers jutted into Sarasota's skyline during the boom—the First Bank & Trust Co. Building, now known as the Palmer Bank Building, and the American National Bank Building, now known as the Orange Blossom Hotel.

To make way for these two structures, Sarasota's two original hotels were razed—the Sarasota House, completed in the spring of 1886, and the Belle Haven Inn, originally known as the De Soto Hotel, completed early in 1887.

The site of the Sarasota House, at Main and Central, was owned by J. H. Lord, who erected the office building as a home for the First Bank, of which he was then president. The building was started late in 1924 and

completed April 25, 1925. At the same time, Lord also built the Lord's Arcade, adjoining.

The Belle Haven was purchased by a building company backed by the American National Bank. The reported purchase price was \$500,000—cash. The sale was made by C. T. Whittle and his son Elmer, owners of the inn, in 1925. Just eleven years before, Whittle had bought the property at an announced price of \$35,000. Not a bad profit! Work on the bank building was started in October, 1925, and the bank moved its offices there December 27, 1926.

Scores of lesser business buildings and apartments, and hundreds of new homes, also were erected during the boom period.

The boom also brought Sarasota a really modern theatre—the Edwards Theatre, now known as the Florida. It was built by A. B. Edwards, Sarasota's most outstanding native son. The building cost \$350,000 and was acclaimed as the finest on the Florida West Coast. More than 1500 persons attended the opening of the theatre, held Saturday night, April 19, 1925.

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The winter quarters of Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey, "the biggest show on earth", attract tourists to Sarasota from all parts of Florida.

The Rev. J. J. Neighbours, rector of the Church of the Redeemer, gave the invocation. A concert was given by the National Czecho-Slovakian Band. Speakers included Mayor E. J. Bacon, J. H. Lord, and Edwards. The big movie feature shown was "Skinner's Dress Suit."

Lagging on at the tail end of the real estate developments of the boom era was that gigantic, grandiose promotion of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers—the town of Venice. Had the project been started several years earlier, it might have been one of the most successful developments in the entire state. But it did not get well under way until the boom was over and, as a result, the promotion turned out to be one of the worst real estate "flops" in history—and practically bankrupted the brotherhood.

On April 23, 1929, Stanton Ennes, former general manager of the development company, stated in the Sarasota Herald that 30,511 acres had been purchased by the brotherhood from September 28, 1925, to March 28, 1927, at a cost of \$4,043,092—for the land alone. Development and sales expenses totalled \$12,000,000 more, he said, making the total expenditure more than \$16,000,000.

Said Ennes: "The Venice project, where the B. of L. E. endeavored to create a large city is now closed down indefinitely, lacking funds to continue. Where more than 4,000 persons once comprised the community, which boasted three large hotels, a bank, a theatre and a thriving business center, only a mere handful now reside, bringing to mind Goldsmith's deserted village."

Ennes charged that huge sums were paid for the property in excess of its value, that contracts were let for improvements in an extravagant and wasteful manner, that boards of interlocking directors, woefully ignorant of financial affairs, effected untold damages to the development through a series of costly blunders. He also charged officers of the organization itself with aiding the practices which placed the brotherhood in a serious financial condition.

So far as can be learned, Ennes' charges were never contradicted. Certainly the Sarasota Herald never "apologized" for having carried Ennes' statement. And, for a number of years, Venice undoubtedly was one of the most lavish "ghost cities" in the entire United States—a town almost without people; in truth, a deserted village. The town had a fine location and was exceptionally well planned. Its public improvements had been made to endure and its buildings were well constructed. Despite all that, Venice almost ceased to be for several years.

#### *Then Came the Morning After*

Late in the fall of 1926, even some of the most starry-eyed Florida boosters began to admit glumly that the grand and glorious boom had

ended—that the gorgeously irradiant Florida bubble had finally burst!

Real estate salesmen and their "birddogs" began to hunt in vain for prospects. Sales shrank pathetically. Prices had been pushed up to such stratospheric heights that they simply couldn't go any higher. And, instead of remaining where they were, they plunged downward at a sickening pace. To save something from the wreckage, everyone tried to sell his holdings—and there were mighty few buyers, even at give-away prices.

In a desperate move to stave off disaster, Sarasotans voted 974 to 31 on Thursday, December 9, 1926, to reduce the corporate area of the city from 69 to 17 square miles. The overwhelming vote was due to the fact that many building projects in the annexed area had been stopped. The builders said they would start again as soon as they got out of the city and escaped its "ruinous tax rates." John Ringling, for one, had stopped work on the Ritz-Carlton and said he would not order work started again until Longboat Key was excluded from the city limits. So Sarasotans voted "Greater Sarasota" out of existence.

Almost simultaneously, a citizens tax committee demanded that the city's proposed \$870,234 budget for 1927 be slashed to \$511,577—and their demands were heeded. Sarasotans had begun to see the handwriting on the wall.

The ranks of the "knickerbocker army" began to thin. One by one, the high-pressure fellows and the binder boys began to pack their bags. No longer were they making fat commissions which enabled them to pay the fantastic prices being charged for the necessities of life. No longer could they pay \$1,500 a season for an apartment worth \$500. So they departed.

Perhaps most of these super-salesmen went north and joined the army of "stock market experts" who were then helping pave the way for the country to travel on the greatest spree of its history—the "ticker-tape debauch" which ended in the crash of October, 1929, and plunged the nation into the greatest depression known to man.

Be that as it may, the departure of the knickerbocker boys caused a rapid reduction in rents in Sarasota. But they were lowered too late to obtain a full 1926-27 "crop" of winter residents. Many remained in their northern homes because they had learned by sad experience during the two preceding winters that Florida living costs had soared beyond their ability to pay.

The poor tourist season hurt badly. So did the departure of the free-spending knickerbocker boys. But the blow which hurt the worst was the drying up of the flood of investment money which had poured into the state in a golden flood. The economics of every resort city was geared

to the flow of incoming capital—and when it ceased, the state was almost paralyzed.

When the effects of the boom intoxication started to wear off, Sarasotans looked around in sort of a bewildered daze and began taking stock of their assets and liabilities.

### *The Million Dollar "Harbor Party"*

On the debit side of the ledger, they found many unpleasant facts. Perhaps the worst was the "million-dollar harbor spree." That episode brings up painful memories but it was such a super-splendiferous spree that the facts must be recorded, unpleasant though they may be.

This is the way Sarasotans threw a million dollars in the bay without hardly a thing to show for it:

Long before the turn of the century, Sarasota began trying to get a deep water harbor, where ocean-going ships could dock. Time after time, Sarasotans appealed to Congress for an appropriation large enough to dredge a 22-foot channel from the gulf to a port inside the city limits. But the appeals fell upon deaf ears.

Declared Capt. J. R. Slattery, of the U. S. Engineer Office, December 17, 1912: "If a 20-foot channel were constructed to Sarasota as is so urgently requested, it is very problematical whether ocean-going steamships could be induced to call at the port and even if they did stop, it is doubtful that the saving that could be effected in freight rates would be sufficient to warrant this improvement. . . . I find it impossible to get away from the idea that this deep channel is desired more for the purpose of exploiting real estate than for the purpose of navigation."

Higher officers in the U. S. Corps of Engineers concurred in this unfavorable report and the most they would recommend was a \$92,000 appropriation to provide a new 7-foot channel in Sarasota Bay by the Longboat Key inland waterway route. That was on March 18, 1914. But, because of the war, the dredging was not started until April 20, 1920, and not completed until a year later. In the meantime, steamers operated by the Tampa-Sarasota Transportation Co., and later by the Favorite Line, often went aground at low tide in Sarasota Bay, disrupting schedules and almost ruining passenger trade. Steamers which came here during the 'Teens included the *Gen. J. B. Carr*, the *City of Sarasota*, the *Manatee*, and the *Jessie B. Adams*.

Even when the 7-foot channel finally was completed, Sarasotans were not satisfied. Far from it. Why, such a dinky little channel was an insult to the city! What Sarasota needed—and had to have—was a real deep water channel and an honest-to-goodness port.

Where would the money for such a project come from? Shucks, that was an easy question to answer. Didn't the city own an electric light plant? And didn't the Florida Power & Light Co. want to buy it—and pay a cool million dollars, in cash, for it? Of course. So what was holding the city back from getting the port it deserved to have? Not a thing in the world!

The proposal to sell the municipal light plant was presented to the voters at a special election January 12, 1926, and approved, 461 to 214. A check for a million dollars was turned over to the city March 4, 1926, by Joe H. Gill, vice-president and general manager of the power company. Even before the city got the money it awarded a \$799,990 contract for the dredging job to R. A. Perry, of Tampa, who formed the United Dredging Co. The remainder of the money was to be spent for bulkheading and docks.

Exulted the Sarasota Times, then owned by L. D. Reagin:

"A huge dredge, with a capacity of 1,000 cubic yards an hour, is digging a channel through New Pass into Sarasota Harbor and the big turning basin. Within eight months Sarasota will have one of the finest deep water ports on the Gulf of Mexico. The city then will be in a position to bid for some of the big steamship business of companies operating vessels to all parts of the world. . . .

"What will the ships carry out in their bottoms? This question is being asked by the uninitiated, those not acquainted with the potential possibilities of the region adjacent to Sarasota. It is true that the present tonnage which may be offered for export is small, but the possibilities for locating industries here loom high. And, besides, Sarasota is going to grow and grow and grow in agricultural importance. Its back country is as rich as that in the Valley of the Nile and when it is developed, whole fleets of ships will be required to carry away the produce grown in this section."

The harbor expert who drafted plans for the port, and advocated the New Pass entrance, was Col. J. M. Braxton, of Jacksonville. Old timers, who knew the coast and were familiar with Gulf currents, warned Braxton time and again that the New Pass entrance and channel eastward to the mainland were impractical—that shifting sands, carried by currents, would fill up the pass and harbor as sure as fate unless long jetties were built into the Gulf and bay. Braxton brushed their arguments aside—who were they to argue with him, a former government engineer?

The logic of the oldtimers' reasoning didn't change the minds of the starry-eyed optimists, mostly newcomers, who then ruled the city. They envisioned Sarasota as another Los Angeles—and they were determined that a big league harbor must be built, willy-nilly, currents or no currents.

A railroad embargo helped the harbor zealots in pushing through their project. The tremendous building boom in Florida had resulted in a need for such immense quantities of building materials that the railroads were overwhelmed. Thousands of cars piled up in bottleneck junction points. The congestion and confusion became so bad that the railroads halted all further Florida-bound shipments for months.

Then said the harbor advocates: "See, we're being crippled because we haven't got a port! If ships could enter here we'd have all the building materials we could use. Now we're paying the penalty for being unprogressive!"

So the harbor project went through a'whooping. By autumn of 1926, the dredging was practically completed, a 58-acre "city island" was created at the east end of New Pass, and bulkheads were constructed. Also, a 10-foot channel was dredged over to Payne Terminal. This was to be deepened later, of course, to 22-feet!

But by the time the channels were completed, the railroads had lifted their embargos and the building boom had almost ended. On Friday, March 18, 1927, an "ocean-going ship" crept cautiously through the pass and anchored at Payne Terminal. But what a ship! It was only 100-feet long and drew only six feet of water. Nevertheless, it was the first vessel which used Sarasota's "million dollar port" and, hence, must be recorded in Sarasota history. It was the *City of Everglades*, of the Collier Line, for which John W. Philip was local agent. It brought three tons of freight for a local merchant.

Philip tried vainly to drum up enough freight business to keep the Collier line steamer operating. But, by then, the railroads were again operating normally and, besides, trucks were being widely used for long distance hauling. It is reported that not more than 50 tons of freight ever came through the million-dollar port!

### *Millionaires One Day — Broke the Next*

One day in October, 1925, when the Florida boom was at its peak, two newspaper reporters put their heads together and began listing all the "millionaires" and "near millionaires" in Sarasota—not counting the Palmers or the Ringlings, or any winter residents.

When they finished they had the names of 37 men listed as being worth anywhere from \$500,000 to a million or more.

Two years after the boom ended, one of the reporters ran across the list in his desk and started checking off the names of the men who had "lost their shirts" when real estate values crashed. Of the original 37, all except four were checked off as "busted." And the reporter wasn't too

sure about two of the four men who had escaped. But he was certain at least 33 were almost penniless.

The reporters' list may not have been any too accurate, nor the checking off either. Nevertheless, it's unquestionably true that the crash hit Sarasotans a terrific blow. Many men lost their life's savings; hundreds were so heavily burdened by debts that they did not get back on their feet again until years later.

Many business firms went bankrupt. Scores of houses and apartments were sold at sacrifice prices to satisfy mortgages. The three leading hotels went into the hands of receivers.

Worse still, the banks of Sarasota were so badly weakened that their ultimate collapse became inevitable.

The American National Bank closed its doors Tuesday noon May 15, 1928. Vice-President R. O. Holton announced: "Due to our inability to realize on past due paper, coupled with a number of heavy withdrawals recently, we are unable to continue without probable serious losses." But he added reassuringly: "With a little time and patience every depositor may expect to be paid 100 cents on the dollar." Unfortunately, his prediction did not come true. Depositors, who had \$462,489 in the bank, ultimately received only 18¼ cents on the dollar. The bank building is now occupied by the Orange Blossom Hotel.

Then came the crash of the First Bank and Trust Co., on July 17, 1929. The depositors finally received approximately 18½ cents on the dollar—and their deposits totalled \$513,091.42. They lost more than \$400,000.

The Bank of Sarasota, which had operated on a more conservative basis, survived until the depths of the Great Depression were reached in mid-summer of 1932. It closed August 29. Its deposits then totalled \$719,518.95. The depositors eventually received 42¼ cents on the dollar. The Ringling Bank and Trust Co. went into voluntary liquidation on May 1, 1933, but Mrs. Edith Ringling, widow of Charles Ringling, paid off the depositors in full, at a loss to herself of a reported \$250,000.

The one bright spot in Sarasota's banking picture during the depression was the Palmer National Bank and Trust Co., which opened July 20, 1929 in the offices formerly occupied by the First Bank and Trust Co. The Palmer Bank closed during the bank moratorium but was reopened the day the moratorium was lifted and, of course, its depositors were fully protected. Original officers of the Palmer Bank were: Potter Palmer, chairman of the board; John B. Cleveland, president; B. H. Meadows, cashier; and F. C. Harrison, assistant cashier. The directors were: Potter Palmer, F. H. Guenther, George B. Howell, John B. Cleveland, C. P. Hogg-lund and R. K. Thompson.

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The natural beauty of semi-tropical Florida is seen at its best in Sarasota's Jungle Gardens.

At the end of the boom, the city and county were nearly crushed under a staggering load of bonded indebtedness. By 1928 the county had a bonded indebtedness of \$5,841,000, in addition to \$1,223,000 worth of school bonds, and the debts of the city totalled approximately \$6,200,000. Bonds had been issued profligately, with the greatest abandon, and apparently no idea that the community might some time suffer a period of adversity.

Much of the bond money was spent on long needed projects; however, there is no doubt but that a large portion of it was wasted, due to the fact that the improvements were made at a time when fantastic prices were charged for building materials and when labor was at a premium. For instance, conservative contractors now say that the city could have had all its harbor work done in normal times at a cost of not more than \$400,000 instead of \$1,000,000.

A large part of the city's bonded indebtedness was assumed to build paved streets in subdivisions "far out in the sticks." Also, to lay water mains in places where no houses had been built. The paved streets were nice to look at, and helped real estate salesmen in making sales, but, after the boom had burst and the streets were covered with grass they were a headache to pay for.

Sarasota's optimism during the boom period did not carry it to any further extremes than did the optimism of other resort cities in Florida. Every one of them was as badly hit after the crash as Sarasota. Many of them found themselves in a far worse predicament. Sarasota finally succeeded in digging itself out of the financial pit into which it had fallen; many smaller communities became hopelessly bankrupt and practically passed out of existence.

An illuminating example of how Sarasotans grasped at straws in the hope of recouping fortunes lost during the crash, was furnished by the "oil boom fever" which struck the city early in 1927.

The fever began mounting when Geologist B. F. Alley announced in the newspapers that he knew of at least four locations in Sarasota County where gusher wells could be sunk. He said he had discovered the locations while working for Harry Sinclair, noted oil magnate. A mass meeting was called in the Mira Mar Auditorium. More than 500 excited citizens attended.

Said Alley: "You people down here have never yet seen any money. The real estate boom was a mere shower compared to the cloudburst of money that is coming into this section with the oil boom. And the boom is coming just as sure as we are standing here. I can almost see the oil."

The first well was "spudded in" by the Associated Gas and Oil Co. on the 66,000-acre John Ringling tract in the Big Salt Spring district, March

13, 1927. More than 5000 persons watched excitedly as the work of drilling the well began. Lively tunes were played by the Czecho-Slovakian band; cigars were given to all the men, and candy to all the women. The well was dedicated with a bottle of champagne by Rogers Hornsby, captain of the New York Giants. One of the principal speakers was George D. Lindsay, editor of the Sarasota Herald, who wished the promoters good luck and plenty of oil.

But, alas and alack, no oil was found. Sarasota's hopes of becoming the center of a great oil producing district were shattered.

## CHAPTER 11

### SARASOTA MADE A MODERN CITY

THE BURSTING of the Florida bubble caused countless headaches, it is true. But it is likewise true that the Big Boom magically transformed Sarasota from a mediocre town into a modern city, and brought more development than would have come normally in 50 years. Perhaps never.

On the credit side of the community's ledger, Sarasota found innumerable things for which it could be thankful.

When the boom ended, the city had three large, modern hotels. It had two "skyscraper" business blocks. It had scores of apartment houses, hundreds of fine new homes, and a first-class business district made up of modern buildings. It had 77 miles of paved streets. It had parks, and



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Looking east on Main Street from the Five Points, in 1946.

playgrounds, and a municipally owned golf course. Also, a fine new hospital. And an excellent school system, with an ample number of fire-proof buildings. All that—and much, much more.

The Florida crash was less severe in Sarasota than in most other Florida resort cities—thanks to the Ringlings.

At the very time when the future looked blackest for the Sunshine State, John Ringling pitched in and gave Sarasota hope. He did it by deeds—not by bombastic promises. For one thing, he kept work going on the Ringling Estates development and the Ritz-Carlton Hotel long after the boom had ended, thereby providing work for hundreds of men who otherwise would have been unemployed.

### *The Big Circus Comes to Sarasota*

Ringling's next step was even more important. He thrilled the city on Wednesday, March 23, 1927, when he announced that Sarasota would be made the winter quarters for the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus. That was real news! News that meant something!

An excellent analysis of what the winter quarters meant to Sarasota was made on April 24, 1927, by Dudley V. Haddock, then special representative of the Florida State Chamber of Commerce. In an article sent to newspapers throughout the country, Haddock stated:

"Sarasota was one of the 'boomiest' of the boom centers during the turbulent days of 1925 and when the bubble burst found itself with much of its assets frozen. The resulting wave of depression was relieved only by the large building program started during the preceding year. But this ended. Sarasota business men looked for the beginning of the recovery with the advent of the tourist season but the tourists did not come until late and when they did arrive they did not spend their money as freely as they had done previously.

"The season was nearing its conclusion with Sarasota's people wondering how much they would have to economize to pull through the summer when John Ringling's announcement came. It changed the situation completely. To prepare for the arrival of the circus, Ringling must spend approximately \$500,000 in the erection of buildings. This assures a large payroll through the summer, and once the circus is here, it will mean the employment of mechanics in the building and repairing of circus wagons, railroad cars and other equipment. It will involve the distribution of hundreds of thousands in Sarasota annually thereafter."

Truer words were never spoken. The winter quarters meant everything Haddock said and much more. As a result of the establishment of the quarters here, scores of high-salaried circus performers made Sarasota their home.

What was even more important, Sarasota got a "tourist attraction" second to none in the state. The Ringling menagerie proved to be a lure strong enough to attract visitors from all parts of Florida. The circus grounds were opened to the public for the first time on Christmas day, 1927. A huge crowd turned out "to see the show." And crowds have continued to wend their way to the circus grounds ever since.

Ringling's next outstanding contribution to the community was the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art.

How the museum happened to be built was told by John H. Phillips, noted architect, shortly after John Ringling's death. Phillips said that when he was in Florida in 1927, he met the Ringlings and happened to mention the fact that he had helped design the Metropolitan Museum in New York City. Said Ringling: "I want a museum built to put my art collection into—how'd you like to design one for me?"

Phillips said he then walked around the Ringling estate, made a few notes, looked over the scattered art collection in the Ringling home, and returned to New York. Two months later he sent Ringling plans he had sketched and a small cardboard model. Ringling wired him to start work at once. And he did—early in the summer of 1927.

The museum, which cost \$2,500,000 is built around a courtyard 150 by 350 feet in size. Of Florentine design, the building has columns from Greece which are more than 1,000 years old and original wall foundations from Italy equally as old. Hundreds of antique marble statues, arches and doorways are incorporated in its construction. The museum was opened to the public in 1931. It houses the finest individual collection of Rubens in the world, artists say, besides many original Titians, Rembrandts, and other world-famous paintings. The objects d'art are said to be worth at least \$16,000,000. Ringling bought them in art centers throughout the world.

The circus winter quarters and the Ringling museum were assets Sarasota gained after the Florida boom burst. Invaluable though they were, they were no more valuable than other assets gained while the bubble was being blown, in all its irradiant splendor, back in the roaring mid-Twenties. For instance, good roads.

### *Sarasota Opened to the World*

Back in the old days, when automobiles were called horseless carriages, motorists called the roads in the Land of Sarasota "wish to God roads."

The motorists weren't blasphemous. They used the expression merely in an attempt to describe the condition of the roads which then existed. In reality, the roads were nothing more than sandy trails in which two pair of deep ruts had been worn. And regardless of which set of ruts the

motorist chose, he always "wished to God" he had taken the other after his car had been stuck a couple times in clutching sand, or nearly bounced off the road by hidden palmetto roots. Actually, the roads were execrable—and that's expressing it mildly.

Finally, in 1912, a so-called "hard-surfaced" road was built between Bradenton and Sarasota. But it soon went to pieces. As a result, few motorists ventured this far south. After World War I, nine-foot asphalt roads were completed as far south as Englewood. But there, the road ended—and any motorist who proceeded farther, did so at his own risk.

As late as April, 1922, the writer of this "Story of Sarasota," accompanied by "the little woman" and ten-month-old daughter Jane, spent twelve long hours going from Punta Gorda to Fort Myers, a trip which now can be made in a half hour. Going farther south, the "foolish Gris-mers" tried to go over the proposed route of the Tamiami Trail, hitting inland from Marco. They were guided by that grand fellow, W. Stanley Hanson, who knew every foot of the Big Cypress country.

Despite the complete lack of roads, excellent progress was made the first day—all of 10 miles. But then came a downpour of rain. The rainy season had started! Needless to say, the trip wasn't completed. Somewhere near Ochopee, the old Model-T bogged down in a forbidding swamp, seemingly for keeps. But friendly Seminoles finally turned the car around and Miami was reached via Fort Myers, Moore Haven, Lakeport, Okeechobee, Fort Pierce and the East Coast road. Part of the trip across the state, where no roads existed, actually was made by compass! Two nights were spent in moonshiners' shanties! Only persons who were "slightly touched" would have attempted such a trip during the rainy season—with a baby. But the state finally was crossed in the Lake Okeechobee region—and that was a real feat in those bygone days!

This personal experience is interjected here only to show what miserable roads existed south of the Land of Sarasota before the Big Boom began. And, so far as that is concerned, there were few roads worthy of the designation "improved" even in Sarasota County.

But during the Roaring Twenties, the county made up for lost time and in less than five years spent \$4,800,000 for roads and bridges. It would be an exaggeration to say the county finally had a "complete network" of roads but it is undoubtedly true that the county got enough good highways to serve its boom-day needs. And practically all the roads and highways were substantially built.

On Thursday, March 24, 1927, the Sarapalmbee Highway was opened and Sarasotans finally could cross the state without backtracking to Tampa. The new road connected with the East Coast by way of Arcadia and Okeechobee. The first trip across the state on the highway was made

by a delegation of motorists headed by Mayor E. J. Bacon, E. A. Smith, then executive vice-president of the Chamber of Commerce, and that champion good roads advocate, George B. Prime.

Prime, incidentally, was a member of the original Tamiami Trail Blazers who succeeded in taking the first cars across the lower Everglades in April, 1923. The caravan bogged down repeatedly and was reported "lost" for several days but it finally reached Miami after the cars had been pulled out of swamps a hundred times or more by mules, oxen and tractors, provided by highway builders.

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Lower Main Street, west of Five Points, as it looked in 1946.

Prime's zeal to get the Tamiami Trail completed never waned and he was one of Sarasota's most joyful men when, on April 25 and 26, 1928, the trail was officially opened. Those were two of the biggest days in the history of the Florida West Coast. A motorcade made up of more than 200 cars left Tampa on Wednesday, the 25th, picked up another 100 cars here in Sarasota, and then proceeded to Fort Myers where the celebrants spent the night. On the following day, the epochal trip across the Trail

was made—and the long-dreamed-of route which enabled motorists to “loop the state” had become an actuality!

Needless to say, Prime wasn't the only Sarasotan who plugged for the Tamiami Trail day in and day out. He was just one of the leaders. Others who fought for it from the day it was first conceived were A. B. Edwards, John F. Burket, George L. Thacker, E. J. Bacon, E. A. Smith, Owen Burns, Dr. F. W. Schultz, Phil H. Levy, A. L. Joiner, F. H. Guenther, J. H. Lord, Dr. and Mrs. C. B. Wilson, M. L. Townsend, and Mrs. C. V. S. Wilson. Those, and many more.

The importance of the Tamiami Trail to Sarasota cannot be over-emphasized. This nationally known highway has attracted uncounted thousands of motorists to the Florida West Coast for the first time—and many hundreds of those first-timers liked the Land of Sarasota more than other parts of Florida, and settled down here to make this their home.

New bridges to the keys were constructed during the boom years. The Treasure Island bridge, built as a toll bridge by E. C. Warren, was opened January 15, 1923. Construction of the Stickney Point road and bridge was started by the county May 8, 1926, and opened the following winter.

A bridge of even more importance, a new Siesta Bridge, was completed early in 1927 and formally dedicated with elaborate ceremonies, Thursday, May 5, 1927. State, county and city officials were in the first five cars which crossed the span. Then came scores of floats and gaily decorated cars. While the procession passed over the bridge, Pilot Russell Holderman dropped flowers on the cars while circling in his plane above. Upon arrival at the beach, the crowd watched bathing beauty contests and sport events. The formal ceremonies were preceeded by a luncheon given by Ralph C. Caples. During the afternoon, Jules Brazil was master of ceremonies.

A \$450,000 bond issue to construct a bridge connecting Lido and Longboat keys at New Pass was overwhelmingly approved, 526 to 8, on Tuesday, April 6, 1927. A hard-surfaced road was constructed on the Manatee County end of Longboat during 1928. The New Pass bridge was completed in April, 1929. Now, for the first time, motorists could drive on a loop highway over the keys from Sarasota to Bradenton, via the Ringling Causeway, the New Pass Bridge, and the Anna Maria Bridge, over Longboat Inlet. But this last bridge was destroyed Saturday night, March 6, 1932, during a very high tide and heavy winds. At the same time, the inlet was widened from a hundred yards to more than a quarter mile. The bridge has not been rebuilt, and, as a result, the development of Longboat Key has been retarded.

*Sarasota Becomes Sports Minded*

In the days before the Big Boom, Sarasota, like most other Florida cities, paid little attention to the need for providing amusements for the winter visitors.

Weren't the waters of the bay and gulf alive with fish, and wasn't there good hunting out in the back country? And couldn't Old Sol be depended upon to make people feel happy and gay? So what need was there for going to great expense just to see that the visitors would be amused?

True enough, Sarasota had a golf course, near the present county courthouse. A nine-hole course, which was laid out in 1905 by J. Hamilton Gillespie and maintained by him until 1910 when he sold it to Owen Burns. But few golfers came to Sarasota in those days and the course was never overcrowded.

In 1916, a few venturesome tourists began providing a sport more to their liking. They started playing horseshoes—or "barnyard golf," as it was then called. They began playing on ground they usurped at Waterfront Park—a little later, courts for them were provided on Main Street near the depot, thanks to George L. Thacker and Charles Ringling.

During the days of World War I, and for several years thereafter, horseshoes was the most popular sport in Florida. Everyone played it—men, women and children. Some of the men finally became so expert that they could toss a dozen or more ringers in succession. Then came professionals who put on exhibitions. Inter-city tournaments were held. The big center of the sport was St. Petersburg and delegations of Sarasota barnyard golfers went over there year after year to compete.

Then, in the spring of 1924, big league baseball came to Sarasota. John McGraw, owner of the New York Giants, was persuaded by two of his good friends, Samuel W. Gumpertz and John Ringling, to bring his team here for spring training. The ball players came February 1 and for more than a month the winter visitors thrilled at seeing the stars get in shape for another pennant fight.

McGraw liked Sarasota so well that he built a \$75,000 home on Sunset Point, next to the home of Gumpertz. He also went into the real estate business—as who didn't?—and laid out Pennant Park near Whitfield Estates. He spent no money on developments but even so, his salesmen sold about \$100,000 worth of lots. Then McGraw got into a tangle of law suits, resulting from land sales, and in the spring of 1927 he took the Giants elsewhere.

However, big-time ball players continued to come here. Indianapolis came in 1929 and 1930. Then, thanks to the efforts of J. Paul Cobb, the owners of the Boston Red Sox were persuaded to make Sarasota their train-

ing headquarters. The team came for the first time in the spring of 1933 and continued coming until World War II curbed train travel. With the war over, the Red Sox at once made arrangements to come here again.

### *Payne Gives Sarasota Its Greatest Gift*

Sarasota quite probably might not have been able to get big league baseball—and many other things—had it not been for Calvin N. Payne, that same winter resident who financed the construction of Payne Terminal.

Payne enabled Sarasota to get major league baseball teams because he was an ardent golfer. Here's how it happened:

The old Gillespie golf club house, built in 1905, burned to the ground Tuesday afternoon, November 2, 1915. To get money to pay for a new club house, as well as rebuild the run-down course, Owen Burns formed the Sarasota Golf Holding Co. A little later, Payne became one of the principal backers of the company. The new club house—now the home of the Elks Club—was formally opened Monday night, March 17, 1919.

Payne realized that the golf course should be enlarged so on March 16, 1921, he bought an adjoining 60 acres from Burns. But, about that time, Sarasota started on its boom-time growth and Payne decided that the centrally located 60 acres could be used for a better purpose than as a golf course. He decided to give it to the city and county for park purposes. The agreement to deed over the land was made in October, 1923, and the grant was completed June 30, 1925.

The tract was given to the community when real estate prices were nearing the crest. Conservative real estate men say Payne would have had no trouble in selling his land for at least \$250,000. But instead of selling, he and his wife, Mrs. Martha E. Payne, turned it over free and clear of all encumbrances. Unquestionably, this was the finest gift ever received by Sarasota—and has proved to be invaluable.

Immediately after Sarasota was promised the land, Mayor E. J. Bacon proclaimed Thursday, October 18, 1923, as a "community work day" so that part of the tract could be converted into a fair grounds. Almost every able-bodied man in the city, and scores of women, turned out to lend a hand. And before the day was over, many of those hands were blistered because everyone really worked! The land was cleared and the buildings were erected with uncanny speed. They seemed to spring out of the ground—practically every member of the Carpenters Union was on the job, eager to help in the project. And so were the union painters and bricklayers—as were the bankers, lawyers, business men, and even ministers. A big barbecue lunch was served. It was a red letter day in Sarasota's history.

Fairs were conducted several years at Payne Park by the Sarasota County Fair Association, headed first by M. L. Townsend and then by R. K. Thompson. Willis B. Powell was secretary. The fairs were outstanding successes and thousands of winter visitors learned for the first time, by the exhibits on display, of the amazing number of products which can be grown on Sarasota soil.

Another portion of Payne Park was cleared and made into Sarasota's first top-notch ball diamond. The city had had ball fields before but none came close to big league standards. The first, just a sand lot diamond, was located near the present Mira Mar Hotel. Later, a larger field was laid out on Central Avenue "at the hill." During the late 'Teens, a fairly good ball park was made near the present Coast Line depot so Sarasota could enter a team in the Florida State League. For a number of years, Sarasota boasted of having one of the best teams in Florida.

Even this Florida league diamond, however, did not meet the requirements of the New York Giants so when McGraw started negotiations about coming here, he insisted that a "big league" field be prepared. A fund was raised by public subscription and by the time the Giants got here, February 1, 1924, the field was ready—at Payne Park.

The tract given by Payne to the city also was used a little later for the municipally owned Trailer Park, now widely known as one of the best in the South.

When the Tin Can Tourists first began coming to Sarasota, back in the winter of 1919-20, the city had no place for them to stay. However, when A. B. Edwards began serving his second term as mayor, on January 1, 1920, a small tourist camp was opened on the southeast corner of Main and Pine streets. Electric lights were strung through the grounds and sanitary facilities provided.

During the winter of 1921-22, the Tin Cannery's grounds were moved to Osprey Avenue south of Morrill and the tourists were charged \$10 per season. During the following winter, on December 2, 1922, a local chapter of the Tin Can Tourists of America was organized with 86 members. Two years later, a privately owned trailer park was opened just north of the present municipal golf course.

This site soon proved inadequate and the present Trailer Park was established at Payne Park in 1931 and the national conventions of the Tin Can Tourists were held there each year thereafter until 1937. The park boasts of an auditorium where indoor games are played on weekdays and church services on Sundays. It also has shuffleboard courts and horseshoe pitching lanes. During the winter months, Trailer Park is a community within a community, and its population at times approaches 5,000.

But all this is getting far afield from golf—the game which caused Payne to buy the 60 acres which later became Payne Park.

The old golf course was sold by the Sarasota Golf Holding Co., on June 7, 1924, to Charles Ringling, who proceeded to lay out the Courthouse subdivision and promote the construction of Sarasota Terrace Hotel.

Ringling's development left the booming city without a golf course at a time when hundreds of golfers were pouring into Sarasota each month. It was obvious that a new course must be obtained—in a hurry. Payne came to the rescue. He had originally stipulated that all the 60 acres should be used for park purposes. But when the city's need for a golf course became acute, Payne agreed to let 14 acres be sold so that money could be obtained to help pay for a municipal course.

The 14 acres, located on Washington Boulevard, were sold at the peak of the boom and brought fancy prices, netting more than \$150,000. This money was used as a down payment on 290 acres, located about two and a half miles northeast of the courthouse. The tract was purchased from Honore and Potter Palmer, trustees of the Palmer estate, and from the East End Land Co. To finish paying for the land, and to build a golf course, the city approved a \$150,000 bond issue July 9, 1925.

The 18-hole course, designed by Donald J. Ross, was formally opened Sunday, February 13, 1927, before a gallery of 1,500 golfers, with Bobby Jones as the star attraction. In an exhibition game, Jones and Louis Lancaster defeated Watts Gunn and Jim Senter. Jones shot the course in 73, Gunn in 75, Lancaster in 77 and Senter in 83. On the eve of the big match, a gay party was held in the Mira Mar Hotel by Sarasota's leading citizens to honor Jones, "the champion of champions." It was quite an event! Jones was the hero of the hour—and Sarasota decided to name the municipal course in his honor "to give it prestige."

The sale of the 14 acres in Payne Park left the Sarasota County Fairgrounds Association without a home. So a tract of land adjoining the golf course on the north was acquired from the East End Land Co., made up of A. B. Edwards, Ralph C. Caples and E. A. Cummer. In exchange for the land, each of these men took a \$16,000 note. A large grandstand was built and other buildings. Then, after two fairs were held, the land was deeded over to the Ringlings for use as the winter quarters of the circus. To get the circus here, the holders of the \$16,000 notes agreed to "forget" about them. They lost their money—but Sarasota got the circus!

While the city was in a park buying mood, in 1925, a \$75,000 bond issue was approved to buy and improve three blocks of land on Osprey Avenue just north of 13th Street. The tract, purchased from Owen Burns, was cleared and made into Gillespie Park. Shuffleboard courts and horse-shoe lands were provided and efforts were made to induce winter residents

to use it as their "playground." But the park was poorly located for an amusement center and it never became popular.

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Lower Main Street in 1946—as seen through the arch of City Hall.

#### *A Real Hospital Is Finally Built*

Only because of the Big Boom did Sarasota finally get a hospital large enough and sufficiently well equipped to take care of the city's needs.

It is true that back in 1908 a 22-bed sanitarium was opened by Dr. Jack Halton on Gulf Stream Avenue, in a building erected by J. Hamilton Gillespie. But Sarasota did not have enough sick people in those days to keep such an institution going and it died a lingering death.

For more than a decade, hospital cases had to be taken to Tampa, or, later on, to Bradenton. In 1921, a small 7-bed, private hospital was opened by Dr. Joseph Halton in the business district.

The need for a larger, publicly-owned institution became glaringly apparent early in the Twenties. In 1921, the Sarasota County Welfare Association, headed by Mrs. George B. Prime, began working for a modern hospital. To begin, the association purchased a tent out of its limited funds and pitched it in the yard of Mrs. C. M. Howard on Orange Avenue near 12th. It was used to care for a tubercular patient. Later, another tent was purchased to house other patients.

Members of the association realized this was only a makeshift arrangement and began working to obtain a cottage hospital. Mrs. Howard donated a lot. Before work could be started, however, it was decided the site was too small and efforts were made to secure a larger one. Four lots in Sarasota Heights were then donated by Louis Combs and Dr. A. O. Morton. The first lot was then deeded back to Mrs. Howard who then gave \$1,100 in cash—the first sizeable contribution received for the project. In February, 1924, Mrs. E. A. Smith was made chairman of the hospital building fund and a well organized campaign was launched to raise the money needed for a modern hospital.

While this drive was under way, Dr. Morton and J. C. Herrick offered a five-room bungalow for use as an emergency hospital. This bungalow, on Tenth near Goodrich, was furnished with funds obtained by a Tag Day drive directed by Mrs. F. W. Schultz. Equipment for the operating room was donated by physicians. The small hospital, with a capacity of six beds, was opened December 4, 1924, with Mrs. Ruth Wilhelm as superintendent. An annex was built soon afterward to take care of the overflow. The emergency hospital was in operation eleven months and during that time 325 bed patients were cared for, in addition to scores of emergency cases.

An effort was made to get a county bond issue for building a regular hospital. But attorneys said the issue would have to be authorized by the state legislature. The city was growing so rapidly, and the need for a real hospital was so acute, that the association decided to try and obtain the money by public subscription.

Mrs. Smith and her assistants then put on the most whirlwind campaign in the city's history. Every organization in Sarasota cooperated—and contributions were received from people in every walk of life. Finally, donations of more than \$40,000 were secured. With this money on hand, the association began construction of a building from plans drafted without charge by Architects T. R. and F. C. Martin. George L. Thacker was chairman of the building committee.

After the hospital building was under construction, the building committee discovered it had been started on property the association did not own. This made it necessary to buy a whole block at a cost of \$55,000.

The transaction was carried out through the assistance of E. A. Smith, G. B. Prime, Dr. A. O. Morton, J. C. Herrick, F. A. Logan, A. S. Skinner, J. W. Tatum, Jo Gill, L. B. Hatch, Louis Combs, R. A. Currin and F. H. Gallup.

Rapidly rising prices of materials caused the building to cost more than originally expected. The deficit was raised by Mrs. Prime, Mrs. Smith, and Mrs. Paul Noble. The building cost \$44,600.

The new hospital, which contained 32 beds, was officially opened Monday, November 2, 1925, visitors being received all afternoon and evening. The first hospital board consisted of Mrs. Prime, chairman; Dr. Morton, vice-chairman; Mrs. Wilhelm, hospital superintendent; George L. Thacker, secretary, and Mrs. Smith, treasurer. The hospital staff included practically all the physicians in Sarasota.

Under the able direction of Mrs. Wilhelm, the hospital opened a training school for nurses in May, 1926. Students in the first class included Misses Gertrude Ivey, Kathleen Williams, Lorraine Riette, Betty Anchmutey, Sussie Blount and Bonnie Noles. In the following September, Honore and Potter Palmer donated a \$7,500 X-ray machine to the hospital in memory of their mother, Mrs. Potter Palmer. A \$175,000 bond issue for building an annex to the hospital was approved 49 to 6, on June 6, 1926. The new addition, designed by Clare C. Hosmer, was started in July, 1927, and completed late that year. It increased the capacity of the hospital to 60 beds.

The hospital's operations were largely controlled by the Sarasota County Welfare Association until late 1927 when the city took it over. During the years which followed, particularly during the Great Depression, the hospital often had hard sledding, due to the fact that expenses exceeded the income and the community was not financially able to make up the deficit and provide needed improvements as well.

However, the hospital has been fortunate in recent years in having aggressive, public-spirited citizens on its board of directors. As a result, more than \$20,000 was contributed in 1945 to erect an addition and also to make other improvements. However, the city and county had outgrown the institution and by 1946 it was obvious that it would have to be greatly enlarged in order to take care of the community's needs. Plans were prepared for a 50-room addition to cost \$125,000. Members of the hospital board in 1946 were Kenneth H. Koach, George L. Thacker, John Somerville, Dr. J. E. Harris and Dr. Stanley T. Martin.

At various times, almost every organization in Sarasota has given its support to the hospital and endeavored to make it an institution of which the city can be proud. As this history goes to press, all civic organizations were joining in an effort to make the hospital one of the best in Florida.

The Joseph Halton Hospital has been enlarged several times since it was first opened in 1921.

Besides hospitals for human beings, Sarasota can boast of having one of the finest small animal hospitals in the country. Located on Higel Avenue near the ACL depot, it is owned and operated by Dr. John R. Scully. Immaculately clean and equipped with the most modern laboratory equipment and operating facilities, it puts to shame many institutions where humans are cared for. People who love their pets bring them from all parts of Florida to Dr. Scully's hospital.

### *More Windfalls of the Big Boom*

When a city grows as though by magic, quadrupling its population in less than five years, it's next to impossible to chronicle all the developments without getting bogged down in a mass of details—details which now seem inconsequential after a lapse of two decades.

However, mention certainly must be made of the fact that another railroad, the Atlantic Coast Line, came to Sarasota during the Big Boom. The ACL extended its tracks here from Bradenton during the late summer and early fall of 1924 and its passenger trains began coming here on December 3, a few weeks after a freight and temporary passenger depot were completed.

During the ACL's first winter here, its passenger service consisted of through Pullman service from the east and west on four trains—the Everglades and the Florida Special from the east and the Dixie Limited and the Floridian from Chicago. The railroad's new \$125,000 passenger depot was formally opened October 1, 1925. Incidentally, the official name of the branch of the ACL from Tampa to Sarasota is the Tampa Southern.

The arrival of the ACL resulted in Sarasota's first and only "railroad battle" in the spring of 1928. The battle occurred because the ACL wanted to make connections with Payne Terminal—and the Seaboard wanted to retain its monopoly of the harbor business. While a merry legal contest was waging over the issue, a city administration friendly to the ACL persuaded the police chief and his men to "turn their backs" for a few hours. A big force of ACL workmen then swung into action under the light of flares and torches—and the tracks were laid, on Saturday night, May 5, 1928. The Seaboard men fumed and fretted while the work was going on, but after the tracks were down, the tempest in a teapot quickly subsided.

The Big Boom also gave Sarasota its first bus transportation, both inter-urban and local. The Reo Bus Line, owned by John T. Cowser, started running open-type Reo Speedwagons, with a capacity of 15 pas-

sengers, on Wednesday, October 26, 1921. Two trips from Sarasota to Tampa were made each day, at 8 a.m. and 3 p.m.

The Reo line was sold in 1923 to the Gulfcoast Motor Line, owned by James Hartsell, and the Gulfcoast sold to the Tamiami Trail Tours, Inc., headed by Baron G. Collier, in 1926. A little later, Collier's concern also bought out the South Florida Bus Line, owned by L. M. Rehbinder, who had started bus service between Sarasota and Fort Myers July 26, 1925, with one trip daily each way. A two trip daily service was started October 31, 1925.

When the Tamiami Trail was officially opened Thursday, April 26, 1928, Collier's line began operating regular bus service between Tampa and Miami. A trip which formerly required more than a day by train now was shortened for Sarasotans to six or seven hours. E. B. Lord has been Sarasota station manager for the bus company since 1930. The present bus terminal was opened July 14, 1943.

The first local bus service was provided on October 4, 1925, by the Sarasota Rapid Transit Co., headed by Roswell King, Louis Lancaster and I. G. Archibald. Only one bus, which carried 18 passengers, was used. The route extended from Five Points to Sarasota Beach. The bus line proved unprofitable and the bus was acquired by Vincent Lowe who had started the Yellow Cab Co. in the fall of 1923. The Yellow Cab Co. later was purchased by E. B. Lord, who also owns the Radio Cab service.

Many attempts were later made to provide local bus service but all failed. Finally, in 1938, city council granted a ten-year franchise to Florida Associates, headed by Oscar Dooley, of Miami. The concern later sold the franchise to City Transits, Ltd., a partnership owned by Alfons Landa, Jean Mondell and J. D. H. Coleman. Bus lines were established and service started in February, 1939. The public frowned upon the buses first used, insisting they were "antiquated and dangerous." To force a showdown, Mayor E. A. Smith finally ordered the police to stop all buses and arrest the drivers. A long, fiery court battle resulted—and the city finally got buses more to its fancy.

### *Modern Schools Are Built*

Perhaps the most important windfall received by the Land of Sarasota during the Big Boom was an excellent county-wide system of modern, fireproof school buildings.

Before the boom began, the county's school system was inadequate, to describe it politely. Most of the buildings were badly run down, the teachers were overworked, and the classrooms were badly crowded.

In Saraosta, the situation was only partially relieved in 1924 when the present Central Elementary School was constructed at a cost of \$99,-

000 and the Booker High School, for colored pupils, at a cost of \$21,000. By October, 1925, the schools were so badly crowded that two shifts of teachers had to be employed. Students attended only part time. Seats were at a premium in both the morning and afternoon sessions.

To remedy the situation, the South Side and Bay Haven elementary schools were constructed in 1925. Each cost \$77,000. In 1927, the Venice-Nokomis Elementary and High School was built at a cost of \$27,000 and the Osprey Elementary School at a cost of \$19,300. During the following year, the Englewood school was built at a cost of \$34,000 and the Laurel school at a cost of \$17,500.

Due to the boom inflation, fantastic prices were paid for many of the building sites. This was particularly true in the case of the site for the new Sarasota High School, built in 1927 at a cost of \$317,000. The small tract upon which the school was located actually cost more than the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co., Ltd., paid for the entire site of Sarasota—and 50,000 acres besides—back in 1885!

Because of the high land prices, and increases in operating expenses, the various school districts had to authorize bond issues exceeding \$1,500,000 during the boom period. Of these, \$1,233,000 were unpaid as late as 1935. The county's schools undoubtedly cost more than they would have cost in normal times, but if they hadn't been built then, they might not have been built at all. And most of them will still be in use long after the pain of paying for them has been forgotten.

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The Sarasota High School, one of the modern schools of the county.

During the boom period, Sarasota got public improvements which normally might not have been provided in a quarter century or more. For instance, within a month after Sarasota became Greater Sarasota, with greatly extended city limits, city council awarded three huge contracts for street paving totalling \$1,359,061.97 and unanimously passed a resolution to advertise for bids for approximately \$1,000,000 more.

Few voices were raised in protest against the various public improvements. In fact, everyone demanded more and more progress. On Monday, November 16, 1925, when a \$150,000 bond issue for improvement and extension of the water system came up for approval or rejection, not one vote was cast against the issue.

The fire department was given modern fire-fighting equipment while the boom lasted and enough firemen were employed to give the city proper protection. The same was true in regard to the police department, which long had been neglected.

In 1926, a franchise was given to John A. Reed, president of the Southern Gas & Electric Co., to provide gas for Sarasota. Despite the bursting of the Florida bubble, the company went ahead with its program and laid mains in all the built-up portions of the city—and gas was turned on Wednesday, December 28, 1927. The work was carried out under the direction of A. J. Lawlor, local manager of the company.

During 1928, the city also got an incinerator to consume the people's garbage and trash. It was constructed at a cost of \$18,000 by the Nye Odorless Crematory Co., of Macon, Ga., and was started in operation December 29, 1928, after being accepted by Mayor E. J. Bacon, City Engineer J. R. Brumby and members of the city council.

During the boom, Sarasota had two excellent daily newspapers and an unusually good weekly.

The progressive Sarasota Times, owned by Mrs. C. V. S. Wilson, was purchased early in 1923 by T. J. Campbell and J. H. Lord who sold it on March 27, 1924, to L. D. Reagin. In May, 1926, Reagin moved the Times from its old home at Main and Lemon to a modern building on 7th near Broadway and celebrated by publishing a "New Home Edition" on June 13, 1926. The Times went into the hands of a receiver on Monday, December 9, 1929. All the files of the paper from 1923 to the time it passed out of existence have been lost or destroyed.

"This Week in Sarasota," a weekly, was published during the boom years by Edward Lansing Cowles who finally was forced, because of ill health, to give up the publication.

The Herald Publishing Co. was organized in October, 1925, by David B. Lindsay, Paul Poynter and E. E. Naugle. The last two sold their interest in the paper to Lindsay a short time later.

The first issue of the Herald appeared Sunday, October 4, 1925. It was a 72-page edition, by far the largest that had ever been printed in Sarasota. The paper was published in a new \$150,000 plant, equipped with the latest machinery. George D. Lindsay was editor of the Herald, and later the Herald-Tribune, until his death February 8, 1945.

The Sarasota Daily Tribune was incorporated in the spring of 1934 with B. W. Powell as publisher; J. E. Hansell, assistant to the publisher; Earl Stumpf, managing editor, and T. K. Lyle, business manager. The Tribune was sold to the Herald on June 12, 1938.

## CHAPTER 12

### DEPRESSION — WAR — AND AFTERWARD

FLORIDA'S FUTURE looked bright during the winter of 1928-29. Living costs in the resort cities had dropped to reasonable levels and a record "crop" of tourists resulted. Sarasota enjoyed an exceptionally good season. The city and county looked forward to a long period of steady, healthy growth.

Then, in October, 1929, came the devastating stock market crash. Before the year ended, stock losses throughout the nation totalled fifteen billion dollars. The Great Depression started. The United States began to be paralyzed, economically and psychologically. And with each passing year, the paralysis became more severe.

During the depression, Sarasota at no time had an unemployment problem comparable to that of northern industrial cities. But, even so, the problem was bad enough. Building activities had come to a dead halt, throwing many men out of work. The citrus industry was badly hit—the demand for oranges and grapefruit became so small that many growers let their fruit rot on the trees. Prices for winter-grown vegetables dropped so low that farmers could not even get back the shipping costs. The fishing industry was crippled—mullet brought less than a cent a pound. The number of winter visitors dropped sharply and merchants lost heavily. But, strange as it may seem, Sarasota emerged from the Depression Era a better city than it had ever been before.

But in 1930 and 1931 there did not appear to be a ray of hope. When E. A. Smith first became mayor in January, 1932, scores of Sarasotans were unemployed. They pleaded with the city officials for jobs—any kind of jobs. But Mayor Smith was terrifically handicapped, as Mayor Bacon had been before him, by the fact that the city's finances were in a chaotic condition. The city had issued so many bonds during the boom era that it could no longer pay the interest, let alone make payments on the principal. Money could not be obtained even to make vitally needed public improvements.

For instance, Ringling Causeway was closed to traffic because the wooden planks had rotted—and no money was available to replace them.

To meet the steadily mounting emergency, the city officials went into a huddle with Dr. John R. Scully, able commissioner of public works. Dr. Scully said that if the council would beg, borrow or steal enough

money to pay for labor, he would get the necessary materials. The money was finally obtained by juggling the city's funds—and Dr. Scully produced the materials.

There then was started Sarasota's first "made work" project—the repair of the Ringling bridge. More than fifty men were employed for over a month. Other "made jobs" followed. However, despite the ingenuity of the city officials, the unemployment problem could not be solved. Repeated appeals were made for federal assistance.

Finally, in October, 1932, a dribble of federal funds began coming into Sarasota—\$1,500 for the entire county! By October 18, a total of 150 unemployed men, all heads of families, were being given three days' work a week, at \$1.50 a day. A few other dribbles followed. They helped a little—but not much.

For those who had money, the depression was no hardship. Living costs were extremely low. For instance, food cost next to nothing. Here are some examples, taken from advertisements in the Herald in November, 1932: Pure pork sausage, 10 cents a pound; best grade western sirloin steak, 15¢; hamburger, two pounds for 15¢; best grade Armour's ham, 18¢ a pound; six large cans of pork and beans, 25¢; 10 pounds of potatoes, 11¢; young roasting hens, 18¢ a pound; fryers, 23¢; six tall cans of evaporated milk, 24¢, and three tall cans of salmon for 25¢. Yes, living was cheap in those days.

Came the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt as president. Then the bank crashes and the banking moratorium. And futile attempts to "balance the budget." Later, "pump priming" was resorted to in an attempt to get the nation's economic machinery running again. And, finally, on Saturday, December 2, 1933, the Civilian Works Administration paid out its first payroll here—641 checks totalling \$4,775—an average of less than \$7 per worker. That was for the whole county.

During 1934, about the only "relief jobs" provided were of the leaf-raking variety, which did the community little good and lowered the self respect of the workers.

It was not until Wednesday, October 23, 1935, that Sarasota got its first Work Projects Administration project—the drainage of the golf course, which gave employment to 40 men. The first federal appropriation was only \$2,974 but Mayor Smith expressed hope that "it is the forerunner of others to come which soon will see WPA in full swing in the county." It was. On the following day, nine other projects were approved, totalling \$128,491. These projects provided employment for 294 men in the city and 114 in the county, in addition to employment of 87 women. Osprey Avenue bridge was widened, the Orange Avenue storm sewer was laid, three miles of sidewalks were built, Luke Wood Park

was developed and beautified, streets were reconstructed, swamps were drained, and so on.

Furthermore, crews of CCC workmen were kept busy for six years at Myakka State Park (q.v.), constructing roads, clearing out underbrush, building picnic houses and cabins, and helping in other ways to make this spot of exquisite natural beauty become one of the state's finest assets.

### *Bayfront Park Is Developed*

In 1937, came a WPA project which has become of inestimable value to Sarasota—Bayfront Park and the Municipal Auditorium.

A large measure of the credit for this project must go to E. A. Smith, then Sarasota's mayor. He conceived the idea for it in 1935 and worked untiringly until the appropriation for it finally was secured.

The true value of this park can be appreciated only when it is realized that it was the last available large waterfront tract in the city limits. Had it not been acquired during the Great Depression, it undoubtedly would have passed into private hands and Sarasota would have forever lost its chance to get a beautiful park directly overlooking the bay. It is estimated that the tract, containing 37 acres, is now worth \$250,000.

The site was obtained by the city from the defunct Sarasota Bay Hotel Co. Taxes amounting to about \$15,000 had accumulated on the property and the city secured it by purchasing the tax certificates, "beating a number of other prospective buyers to the punch," as the Herald gleefully reported.

Arrangements to get sufficient financial backing to obtain the federal grant for the auditorium and park were completed at a meeting held in March, 1937, at the home of Karl A. Bickel. The men who agreed to advance the needed money were B. W. Powell, Samuel W. Gumpertz, John Somerville, J. J. Williams, Jr., Felix Jackson, Ralph C. Caples, George L. Thacker, R. P. Hazzard, Michael Cantacuzene, Harley Crane, Frank Logan, Harry Kellim, George D. Lindsay, Ray Richardson, Frank Evans, Clyde H. Wilson, William G. Selby, and Bickel.

The federal government put \$131,000 into the project in two grants, the first for \$114,000 and the second for \$17,000. Skilled labor was paid for by the city out of its general fund; common labor was paid by WPA. Work was started in July, 1937. The auditorium was opened February 24, 1938, for the Sara de Soto celebration. More than 3,000 persons attended.

Development of the park proceeded while work on the auditorium was under way. Members of the Garden Club united in beautifying the grounds. The pool was developed by the Founders Circle of the club and numerous palms were planted by the Palms Circle. Other Circles super-

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#### WHERE TOURISTS MEET AND PLAY

The Municipal Auditorium in Bayfront Park is shown above. The lower picture provides a glimpse of the lawn bowling and shuffleboard courts in the park.

vised additional phases of the work. The electrically lit fountain was donated by R. P. Hazzard, shoe manufacturer of Gardner, Me. It cost about \$8,000. Designed by Frank Martin, it was built by Louis Larsen, one of the nation's most skilled artisans. Martin's father, Thomas Reed Martin (q.v.), designed the auditorium.

The original recreation building, one story in height, was built as part of the WPA project. The second floor, as well as many other improvements, were paid for by John Tuttle Chidsey, a retired manufacturer of Bristol, Conn., who spent more than \$10,000 on the project. In 1940, Chidsey also paid for the public library building in the park. (See Index: Library).

Bayfront Park now has become the center of all Sarasota tourist activities. During the winter months, the playgrounds are crowded from morning until late at night. The auditorium is used for the city's principal indoor events.

#### *Lido Beach Casino Is Constructed*

Sarasota received another outstanding and invaluable asset during WPA days—Lido Beach Casino.

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The municipally owned Lido Beach Casino.

The Casino was first advocated by the Chamber of Commerce late in 1937 when Roger V. Flory was president and Karl A. Bickel was chairman of a specially appointed beach committee. Early in 1938, a tract of land on Lido Beach with 1300 feet of beach frontage was secured from the Ringling Estate in a tax settlement arrangement.

Construction of the casino as a WPA project was approved by the government June 13, 1938. The city was required to pay \$40,000 in cash, in addition to donating the land. To secure the money, a \$40,000 special revenue bond issue was approved 890 to 97 at an election held Tuesday, July 19, 1938. The bonds were purchased almost immediately by public spirited citizens and work on the casino was started soon afterward.

The casino was formally opened December 27, 1940, with more than a thousand persons attending by special invitation. In the receiving line were Mayor and Mrs. E. A. Smith, Mr. and Mrs. F. E. Price, Mr. and Mrs. Winston Lee, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph V. Lawrence, Mr. and Mrs. Phil Huguenin and Roger V. Flory. On the following night, the casino was opened to the public.

Nobody knows for sure just how much the casino cost. The city contributed \$148,124.45 in land, cash and materials. But WPA went out of existence without disclosing how much the federal government spent on the project. However, the casino is commonly referred to as Sarasota's "quarter million dollar casino" and that figure probably is not far wrong.

Shortly after the casino was completed it was leased to F. E. Price, who had little experience in the public entertainment business. As a result, bankruptcy proceedings followed and the casino was closed. Then, Mayor Smith put Charles L. Herring, city recreation director, in charge, and during the next three years, the casino showed more than \$60,000 profit, thanks to the thousands of servicemen from the Sarasota and Venice air bases who patronized it frequently and liberally.

Mention must be made of the members of the Chamber of Commerce committee who fought for the casino. They were: Karl A. Bickel, B. W. Powell, E. A. Smith, Honore Palmer, Samuel W. Gumpertz, Ralph C. Caples, George D. Lindsay, Albert Moore Saxe, George W. Earle, Ross Beason, Henry Ringling North, John W. Davis, A. B. Edwards, Joseph V. Lawrence, J. J. Williams, Jr., and John Somerville.

### *Sarasota Gets a Modern Air Field*

For more than two decades, air-minded Sarasotans strove to get a good airfield for the city. They finally succeeded—because of the Great Depression and World War II.

As related before, an emergency airfield was built on the Fruitville road during World War I. It wasn't much of an airfield but it was better

than none at all. The first locally owned airplane was landed there Saturday, July 29, 1922, by John B. Browning, who had served as a pilot in the Royal Canadian air force in World War I. The plane was a Curtis JN4D and had been bought from the government by Mathew Dixon, of the Dixon Fish Co. Browning flew the plane here from Arcadia. Several months later he flew to Miami in the record breaking time of three hours and fifty minutes.

Sarasota's first municipal airport, located at the entrance of the circus winter quarters, was officially opened Saturday, March 12, 1929. The tract of 16 acres was given to the city by Ralph C. Caples and A. E. Cummer with the proviso that it would be vacated upon six months' notice if the owners decided to use it for other purposes. The ground was cleared at city expense. Fourteen airplanes, ranging in size from single passenger monoplanes to 14-passenger army planes took part in the dedication program. Otto Hoover thrilled the crowd by his "death defying leap" in a parachute.

Repeated efforts were made during the years which followed to interest an airline in coming to Sarasota. But all efforts failed until the summer of 1937 when the National Airlines was induced by the Chamber of Commerce to make Sarasota one of its stops. Daily passenger and mail service was started Wednesday, August 4, 1937. The passengers on the first flight to Miami were County Commissioners John W. Davis, R. L. Johnson and W. S. Harris and Winder Surrency, attorney for the board. Two baby alligators were sent to President Roosevelt and Postmaster General James Farley by Postmaster L. D. Reagin under the care of Stewardess Charold Georgie.

The airline was forced to cancel many stops here because of wet grounds and late in the year officials of the company threatened to discontinue service unless concrete runways were provided. This could not be done because of the city's lack of money and soon afterward the line's planes stopped landing here.

With the air service discontinued, city and county officials joined in a move to acquire land for a modern airfield. Bradenton and Manatee County officials participated in the project, forming the Sarasota-Manatee Joint Airport Authority, and \$32,000 was obtained to buy the first tract of land, containing approximately 160 acres.

Work on the airfield was started late in 1938 as a WPA project. In 1939, the Civil Aeronautics Authority allotted \$50,000 for the project and during 1940, with war imminent, more grants followed in rapid succession. By November 20, 1940, 225 Manatee County WPA workers were engaged on the airport work and 74 Sarasota County workers, in addition to 17 non-relief supervisors and foremen.

The airport authority later leased a large tract of land from Powell Crosley, Jr., and bought other adjoining tracts, so that the airfield could be made into an army air base. How much was spent by the army on the base during the war is anyone's guess but the total undoubtedly ran into millions, due to the number of hangers and barracks constructed in addition to signal towers, lighting facilities, and other improvements.

The airfield was first used as a bomber base in the spring of 1942. During the following year it was made into a fighter base and at the peak of the field's operations, more than 3,000 men were stationed there. The base was inactivated January 2, 1946. In the following month, the government turned back the base to Airport Authority and on March 7 Matt V. Pilcher of Sarasota was named manager. The airport is now considered one of the best in Florida.

An even larger air base was established during the war at Venice. The project there was originally planned as an anti-aircraft center for 30,000 men but it was soon changed into a service group training center, becoming activated July 7, 1942. On February 15, 1943, it was made into an army air field and pilot training became its chief business.

The first military combat airplane operated from Venice on July 7, 1943, and soon afterward, two fighter squadrons arrived. Airplanes used in training at Venice included P-39 Aircobras, P-47 Thunderbolts, P-40 Warhawks, and P-51 Mustangs. The top strength of the base was 6,000 men. The field was inactivated Friday, October 5, 1945.

### *Sarasota During World War II*

Like the rest of the nation, Sarasota was stunned on December 7, 1941, when radios flashed the news that the Japs had bombed Pearl Harbor—and that the long dreaded war finally had started. From that day until mid-summer of 1945, when Japan finally surrendered unconditionally, Sarasotans subordinated everything to the main task of aiding the nation in its hour of crisis—and praying that the lives of their loved ones in the armed services might be spared.

The war is still too fresh in the minds of everyone to tell how it affected the Land of Sarasota and its people. Only a few facts need be recorded here, lest they be forgotten.

A total of 2389 Sarasota County men, 21 to 35 inclusive, registered for the first draft on Wednesday, October 16, 1940. Before the war ended, 6296 had signed up. This total included 2025 in the older age bracket which was never called. The number from whom the selectees were drawn totalled 4271. Of these, 1726 were inducted—1293 white and 433 colored. It is estimated that at least 400 others volunteered for service before registering. In other words, Sarasota County, with a population in 1940

of only 16,106, had more than 2,000 men in service! The army states that the exact number was 2,285, including women.

Before the war ended, Sarasota men were fighting—and dying—in all parts of the world, from the fog-shrouded rocks of the Aleutians to the jungles of New Guinea and the bloody battlefields of Italy, France and Germany. Rarely did a month pass without news being received of a Sarasota youth making the supreme sacrifice.

It was little wonder, therefore, that Sarasotans did not complain about the seemingly endless red tape and inconveniences of all forms of rationing, about restrictions against traveling, or about going short occasionally in a few items of food. Their only thought was: "Will our boys come back again?" And, as soldiers on the home front, they buckled down to the job of putting over war bond and Red Cross drives, and doing everything else within their power to hasten the war's end.

Throughout the entire war, and for months afterward, Sarasota was crowded with servicemen, due to the proximity of Sarasota Army Air Base and the Venice Air Base. The housing shortage in Sarasota became so acute that OPA put a ceiling on rents which was not lifted until January, 1946.

Termination of the war, and the departure of the servicemen, did not mean the end of Sarasota's housing shortage. During the winter of 1945-46, more winter visitors came to Sarasota than had ever come before, and every available house and room in the city was filled. Hotels were crowded to capacity. A building boom was retarded in 1946 only by shortages of building materials and government restrictions.

As early as the late summer of 1945 it became obvious that Sarasota was entering a period during which it would grow as it had never grown before. And Sarasotans decided that it would be necessary to overhaul and streamline the city's form of government to prevent a repetition of the growing-pain headaches of the Roaring Twenties. To accomplish this, a new city charter, providing for a city manager, was drafted. It was approved 1499 to 405 at a special election held on November 5, 1945.

On December 4, five city commissioners were elected. They were Francis Walpole, J. Douglas Arnest, Arthur E. Esthus, Ernest Sears and Clarence J. Stokes. On January 19, 1946, the commissioners appointed Col. Ross E. Windom to be the first city manager at a starting salary of \$9,000 a year. Colonel Windom had been city manager of Westerville, O., from 1930 to 1940 and of Portsmouth, O., for a year before he entered the army to serve in the engineers' corps. He assumed his new duties here February 1 and soon began making widespread changes in governmental procedure. His success or failure can be reported by the next person who attempts to record the history of Sarasota.

## CHAPTER 13

### — AND THERE ARE THOSE WHO WORK

*The Land of Sarasota* is known throughout the nation as a winter playground for thousands of northerners who migrate south with the birds to escape the frigid blasts of their home states.

During the season of 1945-46, the number of winter visitors totalled at least 40,000. Providing for the needs of these guests constitutes the major industry of the City of Sarasota, as well as all other communities of the county.

But that has not always been the case. Back in the days when the town of Sarasota was in its swaddling clothes, and the back country was still a frontier region, the main industries were fishing, cattle raising, and the growing of fruits and vegetables for home consumption and exporting to Cedar Keys, Tampa and Key West.

As related before, the first settler in this region, William Whitaker, made his living by selling salted sun-dried fish to Cuban traders. In 1847, he brought the first cattle into this section. He also planted the first citrus groves and gardens.

Let's briefly sketch the development of the early industries.

#### *Fishing*

Itinerant Spanish and Cuban fishermen lived in palmetto thatched huts along the shores of Big and Little Sarasota bays, and out on the keys, long before the coming of the first American settlers. The waters of the bays and Gulf were literally alive with fish and the main work of fishermen consisted of salting and drying the fish after they were caught. The dried fish were sold to traders who plied up and down the coast.

American fishermen followed in the footsteps of the Spaniards and Cubans and for many years Sarasota was known as a "fishing village." The industry was stimulated in 1895 when a channel was cut through Sarasota Bay and the steamer *Mistletoe* began making regular runs to Sarasota from Tampa, bringing ice so that fresh fish could be shipped to northern markets.

Contrary to general belief, more fish are being shipped from Sarasota County today than ever before. Nearly 6,000,000 pounds pass yearly through the hands of the three wholesale fish companies in the county: Chadwick Fisheries, headquartered in Sarasota but with four branch

houses in the southern part of the county and in Charlotte County; the Lemon Bay Fisheries, in Englewood, with two branch houses, and the Midnight Pass branch of East Coast Fisheries, of Miami.

The Chadwick company, now owned and managed by R. W. Chadwick, was started in 1900 by Chadwick's father and uncle. Since then the concern has become one of the largest in the state. It wholesales about 4,500,000 pounds of fish a year and brings over \$200,000 a year into the county. About 75 boats and 125 families sell fish directly to Chadwick. About 90 per cent of the fish handled are sold out of the county and about 75 per cent out of the state. Approximately 80 per cent of all fish handled are mullet.

Before the hurricane of 1921, fish warehouses were located along the municipal pier and railroad dock. These warehouses were destroyed by the storm and the industry is now centered at Payne Terminal.

Since early in the Twenties, commercial fishermen and tourist anglers have been waging intermittent warfare. The tourists contend that the netting done by the commercial fishermen has almost ruined their sport. The commercial fishermen reply that their catches in the bays consist principally of mullet, which do not take the hook. Which side is right is anyone's guess.

Mention should be made here that on June 12, 1912, A. J. and Henry Vickers, of Atlanta, Ga., caught a manatee a mile off shore New Pass—the first manatee which had been captured since 1888. The mammal, which weighed 410 pounds, was taken to Cedar Point where it was placed in a water pen and exhibited. It measured six feet seven inches long.

Mention also should be made of the worst "fish hog" who ever fished in these waters, a publicity-seeking St. Petersburg real estate promoter, who was given great publicity in 1925 for his "feat" in having caught 29 tarpon weighing from 45 to 155 pounds each off the shore of Venice-Nokomis one day in June. The fish weighed 2,200 pounds. Anglers asserted this "angler" had not caught the fish by sportsmanlike methods; he had made the big haul, they said, by drowning the fish after they had been hooked, keeping his launch moving ahead so fast that the hooked fish did not have a fighting chance. Despite all this, his picture with the 29 tarpon has been used repeatedly in the newspapers, for what reason, heaven only knows.

### *Cattle Industry*

The rich grazing plains of the Myakka region have been used by cattlemen to raise their herds of cattle for nearly a century. Bill Whitaker took the first herd there in 1847. Then, years later, came William H. Vanderipe, Samuel G. Curry, Shadrick "Shad" Hancock, and Garrett "Dink" Murphy, whose herds grazed on the Myakka plains decade after decade. Farther

south, Jesse Knight (q.v.) established a veritable kingdom of his own, dominating the entire region southeast of Horse and Chaise.

The herds of these cattlemen, as well as the herds of men who were not rated as "big cattlemen," grazed on the open range—unfenced land owned first by the federal government, then by the state, and then "sold" for little or nothing by the Internal Improvement Board to land speculators or so-called "improvement companies."

For many years, most of the cattle raised were shipped to Cuba, Shaw's Point and Punta Gorda being the main shipping points. The standard price received was a doubloon a head—\$15.60. During the Spanish-American war, while thousands of troops were stationed at Tampa, the cattlemen made a killing, the demand for meat boosting the price to hitherto-undreamed of prices. When the war ended, the island of Cuba was almost stripped of cattle; as a result, the demand for Florida cattle continued strong for a number of years thereafter.

In the spring of 1900, the big cattlemen attempted to drive out the "small fellows" by fencing off huge tracts of the open range, not only in this section but in adjoining counties. They didn't own the land but they tried to preempt it by strong-arm methods, bringing in gun-toting rough riders from the West whom they managed to have deputized. As a result, a cattle war developed between the large and small owners. The "little fellows" banded together and one night at midnight cut literally hundreds of miles of fence. The deputy "toughies" rounded up nearly 150 of the small owners and their friends and took them to Bradenton for trial. But while they were in jail, another siege of fence cutting occurred and the judge was forced to admit that those arrested perhaps had been wrongfully accused. All were released. Thereafter, the big fellows did not again try to fence the land in this region until they had bought it and thereby acquired a legal right to fence it in.

After the Cuban demand for cattle ebbed, the Florida industry began going into the doldrums. There were reasons. Many of the cattlemen were tight-fisted and unprogressive, to put it mildly, and they refused to do anything to improve the breed of their cattle or to safeguard the cattle's health. As a result, most of the cattle raised were scrawny and tick-infested, and the meat was tough and unpalatable. Hardly anyone except the very poor ate "native beef."

In 1915, when Mrs. Potter Palmer began importing prize bulls to improve the breed and also introduced tick eradication methods, other cattlemen scoffed. Her ranch, called "Meadow Sweet Pastures," probably would have been developed into one of the best in the state had Mrs. Palmer lived to carry on her program.

In 1923, other states began throwing up quarantines against Florida

cattle because of the tick. Florida cattlemen finally admitted they would have to do something if they wanted to retain even their small market. And, ultimately, all were forced into line and required to dip their cattle regularly.

During the past two decades, the unprogressive cattleman of bygone days has almost disappeared. Today, all the grazing lands in Sarasota County are owned by men with vision who are determined to make Florida beef as good as any Western beef. They are cross-breeding the tough little piney woods cow with better strains: Brahman, Black Angus, Herefords, Shorthorns, and some Devon and Red Polled. They also are seeding the grazing lands with Para, Bahia, Dallas and Bermuda grass.

The largest ranch in the county was developed, beginning in 1937, by Ross Beason, a business man of New York. This ranch, named the Hi-Hat, is now owned by H. E. Turner. Other well-known, progressive cattlemen in this region are Charlton H. Downs, who brought in the first Brahma bull, and Fred House, who brought in many Black Angus, A. Y. Carlton, George Terry, Albert Blackburn, Tracy Calhoun, Lewis Hawkins, Jesse Tucker, Douglas Pearson, and Henry Vanderipe. In 1946, approximately 150,000 acres in Sarasota County were under fence and about 10,000 head of cattle were being raised.

### *Citrus and Produce*

During the past 20 years, Sarasota County has been making progress in the development of fertile back country land. Only a small fraction of the available acreage is under cultivation, true enough, but each year the number of farms steadily increases and so does the quantity of products grown.

County Agricultural Agent W. E. Evans reported in 1946 that 6,000 acres in the county were planted in citrus groves. The largest are the Hyde Park Citrus Groves, started in 1922 by Honore and Potter Palmer, Jr. In 1946, the groves covered 1,200 acres and produce more citrus fruit than any other grove in this section of Florida.

The biggest "money crop" of the county is celery and Sarasota County now ranks as the third largest celery producing county in Florida. This was made possible by the formation in 1923 of the Sarasota-Fruitville Drainage District which drained 8,000 acres near Fruitville. This project, fathered by Honore and Potter Palmer, Jr., cost \$600,000. The drained area included 2,000 acres of rich muck land, of which 1,400 acres have since been planted in celery. A large part of the crop is marketed by the Palmer Farms Growers Association, the largest celery "co-op" enterprise in the state. Its members include individuals who purchased tracts of land from Palmer Farms.

Other large growers and marketers are: Burquest & Stockbridge, F-an-Cee Farms, Muckland Celery Co., the Raoul Co., and the Sarasota Celery Co. Approximately 1,500 persons are employed in the raising and marketing of the celery crop; 70 per cent of those employed are negroes.

It should be recorded here that drainage of Palmer Farms was started in 1924; that the first plantings were made in January, 1927, and that the first shipment of produce, consisting of three cars of tomatoes and one car of potatoes, was made May 3, 1927. Later, the Farms specialized on the production of celery.

#### *A New Industry Is Born in Sarasota*

Back in the late fall of 1924, when Florida was booming at a dizzy pace, a man came to Sarasota to enter the plumbing and heating business.

The newcomer wasn't just an ordinary plumber or an ordinary cash-register-ringing type of business man. He was a skilled heating engineer. Besides, he was a man with ideas. Good ideas—practical ideas.



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#### THE INVENTION WHICH MADE A NEW FUEL POSSIBLE

Green's Fuel is stored in an underground system outdoors. *Left:* Underground system before lowering into ground. *Right:* Tank in ground, partially covered and with copper tubing run into house. Cast iron ground level box, not shown, covers valve equipment when installation is completed.

His appearance was deceiving. He looked and acted shy and retiring. He was, more than a little. But what he might have lacked in dynamic aggressiveness, he more than made up for by unlimited perseverance and a dogged determination to make his ideas become realities.

That man was James B. Green, a native of Crenshaw County, Alabama. Because of him there was born in Sarasota a new industry. The product produced was a new fuel—a fuel which now has become internationally known as Green's Fuel.

This fuel, made out of heat-rich gases which formerly went to waste in the oil fields, has been a boon to countless thousands of families throughout the South, particularly in suburban areas. A safe, dependable, inexpensive fuel, it is today being used in a constantly increasing number of localities and Green's Fuel, Inc., the parent concern, is ranked among the fastest growing companies of the nation.

Green conceived the idea for the new fuel because of complaints from customers of his plumbing establishment. Not complaints regarding the service his company gave but complaints regarding the lack of satisfactory fuels in Sarasota back in the mid-Twenties.

At that time, Sarasota's municipally-owned electric plant was overtaxed because of the city's boom-time growth and the power often went off when it was needed most. To make matters worse, the city then had no gas system. As a result, most people had to use kerosene and wood for cooking and heating. They constantly demanded something better. They complained so often to Green that he finally decided to provide a fuel which would satisfy the need.

He knew that tremendous quantities of hydrocarbon gases were being wasted daily in the petroleum industry and he made up his mind to devise some method by which those gases could be utilized.

Other heating engineers told him he was undertaking an almost impossible task. But he persevered. Eventually, after months of laborious research and correspondence with scientists in many parts of the world, he discovered the formula he was seeking. But that did not mean his pioneering work was completed. Far from it. He next had to find a company which could produce the exact fuel he demanded. He thought that would be easy, but it wasn't. Months more passed before he finally located a company in Tulsa, Okla., the Miller Refining Co., which assured him it could devise a method by which the fuel could be made, in quantities as large as might be desired.

Late in 1931, samples of the desired fuel were received. Green tested it, again and again, in his tiny shop on Main Street. It was exactly what he wanted—a fuel which was a liquid under pressure but which vaporized as a gas when the pressure was reduced, and would pass through distribut-

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#### EVOLUTION OF GREEN'S FUEL, INC.

*Upper left:* In this tiny heating and plumbing establishment, J. B. Green conceived the idea of Green's Fuel, in 1925. *Upper right:* J. B. Green was proud of his staff of six employees in 1929, when his concern was just getting well started. *Center:* Employees in the home office and plant in 1941. *Below:* 1946 home of Green's Fuel, Inc.

ing pipes to gas appliances. It gave an intense heat, hotter even than natural gas. Furthermore, tests proved that the fuel was harmless inasmuch as the gas would not cause asphyxiation, either in the raw state or after combustion.

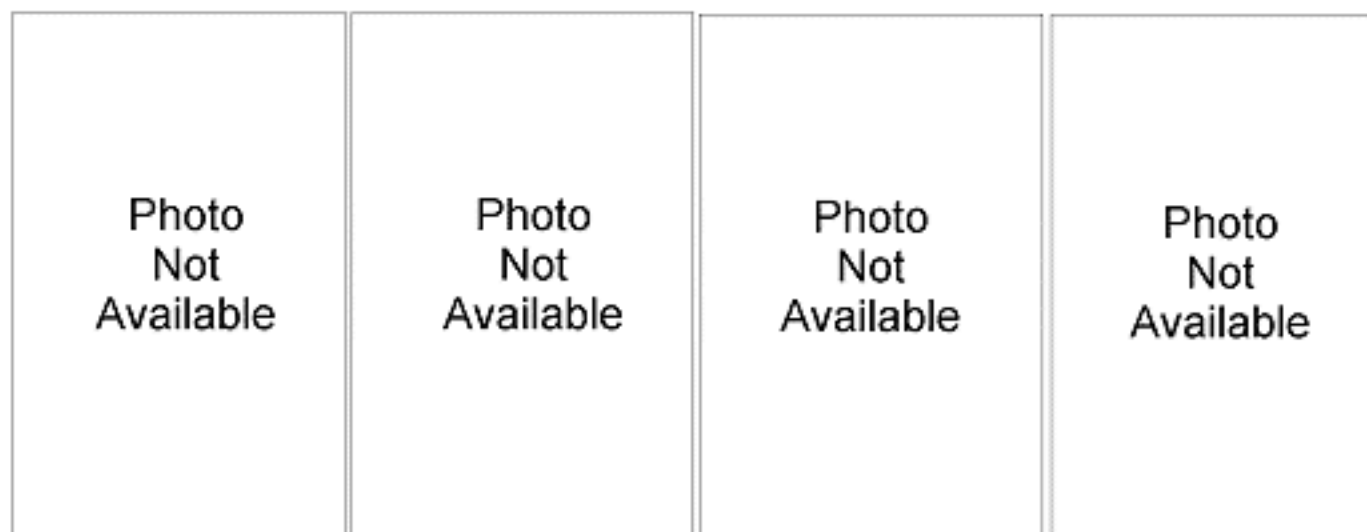
To distribute the new fuel for domestic and industrial purposes, tanks for the storage of the liquid and apparatus for the control of the gas were necessary. To devise them seemed at first to be just a simple bit of engineering. But Green was balked by patents covering so-called "bottled gas," previously marketed, and weary months of experimentation followed.

During this period, Green often became discouraged. But just at the time when he needed help most, another Green entered the picture—W. R. Green, one of the original patentees of the famous Daniel Green Comfy Slippers, who had retired and come to Sarasota. The two Greens were not related, but that made no difference. "W. R." became as enthused over the new fuel as "J. B." was himself, and he encouraged and inspired "J. B." to go ahead with his experiments.

Three associates helped him greatly: his son, Taylor Green, offered engineering suggestions; Miss Sarah Jackman served as a tireless secretary, and J. H. Hunter assisted in carrying on the mechanical experiments.

In 1932, Green finally succeeded in perfecting a system by which the fuel could be stored and distributed. Experimental installations were made—and it was learned that the system worked perfectly. In 1933, an application for a patent was filed and this was granted in 1934 by the U. S. Patent Office, giving Green the first patent on an underground system for distribution of liquified petroleum gas.

The first experimental installations, made in Sarasota, were tested during all seasons of the year and Green's theories were proven to be sound.



OFFICIALS OF GREEN'S FUEL, INC.

*Left to right:* J. B. Green, president; Taylor Green and Kenneth H. Koach, vice-presidents; and Miss Sarah A. Jackman, secretary-treasurer.

The value of the new fuel for domestic and industrial purposes was thoroughly established. Then followed an expansion program carried out by franchising the right to distribute Green's fuel in other sections. It swept over Florida and then into the southeastern states. Progress was retarded by the war but when the war ended, the company soon began to make up for lost time.

From the beginning, the business has been built along sound lines. Emphasis has been placed on allotting territory only to distributors of character, business ability and financial responsibility. This policy, with careful collaboration and direction by the home office, has resulted in approximately doubling sales each year since the inception of the business.

The marketing company, Green's Fuel, Inc., was incorporated in 1935 with J. B. Green as president, W. R. Green and Taylor Green, vice-presidents, and Miss Sarah A. Jackman, secretary-treasurer. In 1940, after the death of W. R. Green, Kenneth H. Koach was made vice-president and general manager.

In 1940, Green's Fuel attracted the attention of Hall Roosevelt, brother of Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, who at that time was experimenting with low-cost housing units in Hyde Park, N. Y. Mr. Roosevelt, a consulting engineer, flew here to discuss the idea of installing two complete Green's Fuel outfits in his housing project. Mr. Green and a mechanic, at Mr. Roosevelt's request, spent a week at Hyde Park supervising installation of the outfits, which proved completely satisfactory.

The home office of Green's Fuel, Inc., has been located since 1940 in the concern's new building at Broadway and Green Street.

## CHAPTER 14

### SARASOTA COUNTY IN REVIEW

#### THE LAND OF SARASOTA

The Land of Sarasota is known to the nation as that section of the Florida West Coast which borders on the shores of Sarasota Bay and Little Sarasota Bay, infant sisters of the beautiful Gulf of Mexico.

Sarasota County, divided from Manatee County in 1921, extends southward to include the community of Englewood on Lemon Bay. It is bounded on the east by De Soto County and on the south by Charlotte County. The division line between Sarasota and Manatee Counties, on the north, divides Sarasota Bay and Longboat Key between the two counties.

In 1823, after Florida had become a territory of the United States, Peninsular Florida was sliced into counties by Congress, and the Land of Sarasota was included in Mosquito County which extended from the Gulf to the Atlantic Ocean, and from some distance north of Fort Brooke (now Tampa) south to Charlotte Harbor.

In January, 1834, Mosquito County was divided by Congress and the western part, including the Land of Sarasota, was named Hillsborough. Fort Brooke became the county seat. Manatee County was split from Hillsborough in October, 1856. It extended from the Gulf to Lake Okeechobee, was 60 miles long, and contained approximately 5,000 square miles. The village of Manatee was the county seat until April 29, 1866, when the county commissioners voted to build a courthouse at the now almost extinct community of Pine Level, approximately 40 miles inland.

In April, 1887, Manatee County was cut in two, creating De Soto County, and Manatee's County seat was established in Bradenton after a hotly contested battle in which the new town of Sarasota tried in vain to be designated as the "capital" of the county. Sarasota finally voted in favor of Bradenton, instead of Manatee, because it was in Manatee that a posse had been organized to round up the members of the Sarasota Vigilance Committee (q.v.) and old Sarasotans could never forgive the action.

The Land of Sarasota remained in Manatee County until July 1, 1921, when Sarasota County was created by the state legislature. Reasons for division, and the details of the division battle, are given in the general text, in Chapter X.

Parenthetically, it should be mentioned here that many writers have stated that Sarasota was originally a part of Dade County. This is definitely not the case, despite the fact that Dade County was placed on the west side of Florida on one or more maps of the 1830's. Dade County was not created until two

years after Hillsborough and was always in the southeastern part of the state. The map makers simply erred.

The first officials of Sarasota County, appointed by the governor, are given in Chapter X. Here are the first county officials chosen by the people at the first county election on June 6, 1922: County commissioners—M. L. Wread, Dist. No. 1; T. A. Albritton, No. 2; M. L. Townsend, No. 3; J. D. Anderson, No. 4, and W. F. Hancock, No. 5. School board members elected were: A. L. Joiner, District No. 1; T. L. Livermore, No. 2, and Guy Ragan, No. 3. Other officials chosen were: W. Y. Perry, county judge; L. D. Hodges, sheriff; Herbert S. Sawyer, prosecuting attorney; O. E. Roesch, clerk of circuit court; E. G. Easterling, tax collector; Thomas A. Hughes, tax assessor; T. W. Yarbrough, supervisor of public instruction, and R. B. Chadwick, supervisor of registration. J. H. Lord was selected as the first representative of Sarasota County to the state legislature.

Following are the names of all county officials from 1921 through 1946:

#### COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

District No. 1: Frank A. Walpole, 1921-22; M. L. Wread, 1923-26; Louis Lancaster, 1927-28; J. F. Miller, 1929-1932; John W. Davis, 1933-1940; Otis L. Howell, 1941-1946.

District No. 2: L. L. May, 1921-22; T. A. Albritton, 1923-24; George B. Prime, 1925-26; J. Paul Gaines, Sr., 1927-28; W. S. Harris, 1929-46.

District No. 3: F. J. Hayden, 1921-22; M. L. Townsend, 1923-26; Guy M. Ragan, 1927-1930; George Higel, 1931-34; J. L. McAllister, 1935 until his death August 23, 1945, when M. Cousins was appointed to succeed him.

District No. 4: P. E. Buchan, 1921-22; J. D. Anderson, 1923-24; Floyd L. Ziegler, 1925-1930; F. J. Ziegler, 1931-34; P. E. Buchan, 1935-46.

District No. 5: Henry Hancock, 1921-22; W. F. Hancock, 1923-24; J. J. Crowley, 1925-28; W. D. Wyatt, 1929-36; R. L. Johnson, 1937-38; A. Y. Carlton, 1939-1942; Oliver Alderman, 1943-46.

#### CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT

O. E. Roesch, 1921-26; John R. Peacock, 1927-1944; W. A. Wynne, 1944-46.

#### TAX ASSESSOR

A. B. Edwards, 1921-22; Thomas A. Hughes, 1923-1928; J. Paul Gaines, Sr., 1929 until his death Nov. 15, 1939, when his widow was appointed to serve out his unexpired term; Glover E. Ashby, 1940-46.

## TAX COLLECTOR

A. M. Wilson, 1921-22; E. G. Easterling, 1923-24; Claude E. Ragan, 1925-1932; Charles G. Strohmeyer, 1933 until his death April 15, 1944, when W. P. Dozier was appointed to fill out his unexpired term; Charlie Hagerman, 1944-46.

## SUPERINTENDENT PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

T. W. Yarbrough was appointed June 22, 1921, took office July 1, 1921, and served continuously until he retired January 1, 1945. Six candidates ran in the election May 2, 1944. Results were: Verman Kimbrough, 959 votes; A. R. Anderson, 935; Doris Brownell, 780; D. C. Kickliter, 774; Julian C. Roberts, 356, and C. Woodburn Matheny, 335. In the run-off election Tuesday, May 23, Kimbrough defeated Anderson, 2047 to 1434.

## SHERIFF

B. D. Levi, 1921-22; L. D. Hodges, 1923-28; W. A. Keen, 1929-32; C. B. Pearson, 1933 until illness forced him to resign. His son, B. D. Pearson was appointed on May 26, 1939, to succeed him. B. D. Pearson was elected to the office in 1940 and again in 1944.

## COUNTY JUDGE

W. Y. Perry, 1921 until his death in 1924 when Paul C. Albritton was appointed to succeed him; Judge Albritton was elected in 1924 and served until he was appointed circuit judge in 1927; Arthur R. Clarke was elected in 1928 and served through 1932; Francis C. Dart, 1933 until he resigned late in 1937; Forrest Chapman, 1938-46.

## PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

Frank Redd, 1921-22; Herbert S. Sawyer, 1923-24; Henry P. Philpot, 1925-28; Thomas L. Glenn, Jr., 1929-32; Henry P. Philpot, 1933-36; Lamar B. Dozier, 1937-46.

## SUPERVISOR OF REGISTRATION

T. A. Hughes, 1921-22; R. B. Chadwick, 1923-32; W. T. Dixon, 1933-46.

## STATE REPRESENTATIVE

J. H. Lord, 1921-24; Louis Combs, 1925-26; Everett J. Bacon, 1927-28; Louis Lancaster, 1929-30; J. Velma Keen, 1931-32; John L. Early, 1933-38; Win-der Surrency, 1939-40. William W. Perry, 1941-42; Jerry Collins, 1943-46.

NOTE: Last named officials in above lists were serving unexpired terms in 1946.

## TOWN OF SARASOTA

The founding of the town of Sarasota was conceived in Scotland by officials of the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co., Ltd., a British concern which had purchased approximately 50,000 acres in this region, principally from Hamilton Disston and his associates.

The townsite was surveyed during the winter of 1884-85 by Richard E. Paulson, an engineer for the

British company. Paulson was assisted by Lewis Colson, a colored man, who remained here. The town plat was drawn in Edinburgh and the first sales from it were made in Scotland and England in the late summer and fall of 1885.

A colony of 68 men, women and children, mostly from Scotland, arrived in Sarasota December 28, 1885. All except the members of the John Browning family, and a few other individuals, left within a few months.

The town plat was recorded in the courthouse of Manatee County at Bradenton July 27, 1886.

Sarasota was incorporated as a town under the general laws of Florida at a meeting of 53 citizens October 14, 1902. The incorporation was recorded in Manatee County records November 14, 1902. The original town seal was described as "a mullet with a rising sun over palmettoes with shells at the base." The town's motto was: "May Sarasota Prosper." The first officials were elected October 14, 1902.

The town's incorporation was validated by the state legislature in the spring of 1903 and signed by Governor William Sherman Jennings April 30, 1903.

While Sarasota was a town, its mayors were: J. Hamilton Gillespie, 1902 to October 16, 1907; J. B. Chapline, Sr., from October 16, 1907, to October 14, 1908; G. W. Franklin, from October 21, 1908, to October 20, 1909; Gillespie, from October 20, 1909, to October 17, 1910; Hamden S. Smith, October 17, 1910, to October 18, 1911, and Harry L. Higel, from October 18, 1911, to January 1, 1914.

Men who served as councilmen during this period were: Dr. J. O. Brown, two terms; J. B. Turner; W. J. Hill; Harry L. Higel, five terms; George W. Blackburn; S. D. McKean, two terms, died in office April 2, 1905; Judge R. P. McDaniel, two terms; W. F. Rigby; J. A. Redd; T. L. Ellerbee; J. L. Iversen; K. M. Hebb, two terms; William Jeffcott, three terms; Dr. Jack Halton; G. W. Franklin; J. W. Keener; C. C. McGinty; John Hamilton Gillespie; T. J. Bryan; J. A. Clark; G. W. Barker; C. M. Borsyth, two terms; Dr. Joseph Halton; J. W. Harvey; George Roberts; Charles Seale; W. A. Chapell; J. W. Baxter; Hugh K. Browning; C. M. Howard, and J. D. Hazen.

Clerks elected during this period were: B. D. Gullett, C. V. S. Wilson, E. W. Morrill, S. D. Hayman, J. B. Chapline, Jr., and J. Louis Houle. Marshalls were: T. F. Blair, D. S. McRae, James Bates, C. J. Ross, C. V. Thigpen, F. C. Bethea, and L. D. Hodges. A. B. Edwards was the town's first tax assessor, being first elected October 9, 1907. He was re-elected in 1909 and 1911.

## CITY OF SARASOTA

Sarasota was incorporated as a city by a special act of the state legislature signed by Governor Park Trammell May 16, 1913. The act became effective January 1, 1914.

A. B. Edwards was the first mayor elected under the new city charter. He served during 1914 and 1915. During the next 30 years the mayors were: Harry L. Higel, 1916-17; G. W. Franklin, 1918-19; A. B. Edwards, 1920-21; E. J. Bacon, 1922 through 1931;

E. A. Smith, 1932 through 1937; Verman Kimbrough, 1938-39, and E. A. Smith 1940 through 1945.

Councilmen from 1914 through 1945 were J. W. Baxter, 1914-15; T. W. Yarbrough, 1914-15; George L. Thacker, 1914-15-24-25-26-33-34-35; George L. Roberts, 1916-17-18; K. M. Hebb, 1915-16-17-18; E. J. Bacon, 1916-17; E. J. Moore, 1918; George B. Prime, 1918-19-20 to February 28, 1921; Will McFarland, 1920; J. H. Walker, 1920-21-22; I. G. Archibald, 1921-22; Russell C. Thompson, 1922; William M. Tuttle, 1924-25; Frank R. Dillinger, 1924; W. H. Stephens, 1924-25-26; J. B. Lang, 1926; Theron Burts, 1927-28-29; Otis F. Landers, 1927-28; Dana Milligan, 1927; Stanley Longmire, 1928-29-30; Jo Gill, 1929; L. C. Strong, 1929-30; Dr. A. O. Morton, 1929-30-31; F. A. Logan, 1929-30; C. M. Williams, 1930-31-32-33; Ray Richardson, 1930-31-32; J. G. Whitfield, 1930-31; S. B. Jennings, 1931 through 1936; I. G. Archibald, 1932-33-34; W. C. Jungmeyer, 1932-33-34; Russell A. Currin, 1934-35-36; Milton R. Thomas, 1935-36-37; W. V. Barth, 1935-36-37; Leon R. Cooler, 1936 through 1941; A. W. Knapp, 1937 through 1945; George W. Warner, 1937-38-39; Charles C. Montague, 1937 through 1940; E. A. Stewart, 1938-39-40; A. W. Malone, 1940 through 1945; Dr. John R. Scully, 1941-42-43; Jack A. C. Halton, 1941-42-43; Walter C. Kennedy, 1942 through 1945; John B. Browning, 1942-43-44-45, and J. V. Lawrence, 1944-45.

John F. Burket served as city attorney from late 1913 until he resigned early in 1927. The city then employed the law firm of King & Barringer to handle its legal work for two years. Harrison E. Barringer then was appointed city attorney. He served from 1929 through 1932 and later from 1935 through 1937. J. J. Williams, Jr., served during 1933-34 and again from 1938 through 1940. C. L. McKaig served from early 1941 through 1945. He was succeeded by Francis C. Dart.

City clerks have been: Frank Higel, 1914-15, J. Paul Thompson, 1916-1920; Frederic A. Swain, 1921; Jo Gill, 1921-22; H. I. Southwick, 1923-27; Harry Mathews, 1928, and J. E. Richards, from 1929 through 1945. Richards also served as tax collector.

During Mayor Bacon's administration, tax assessments were determined by city council. Richards then handled the work until 1937 when O. F. Gill was appointed assessor. After he served a few months, Charles H. Pickett was appointed to the position and he served through 1945.

Alex Browning was the city's first commissioner of public works, serving 1920-21. Since then the commissioners have been: Leon Pickett, 1922-23; J. R. Brumby, 1924-28; Dr. John R. Scully, 1929-34; Guy M. Ragan, 1935-36; Dr. John R. Scully, 1937-39, and E. H. Knight, 1939-42. Knight was succeeded by J. Fred Chapman who resigned in May, 1946, and was succeeded by J. S. Evans, Jr.

Henry Behrens served as chief of the fire department from the time it was organized, late in 1908, until he was succeeded by C. I. Stephens, early in 1922. Maitland Knowles was appointed chief in June, 1924.

James R. Cowser was appointed chief in 1934. He served two years and then Knowles was reappointed.

L. D. Hodges served as marshal and then police chief from 1908 through 1921 when he was succeeded by S. Tilden Davis who served until his death on January 23, 1937. Luther LeGette was acting chief until Edward A. Garner was appointed in March, 1937.

A new city charter, providing for the city manager form of government, was approved 1499 to 405 at a special election November 5, 1945. On December 5, five city commissioners were elected: Francis H. Walpole, J. Douglas Arnest, Arthur E. Esthus, Ernest C. Sears, and Clarence J. Stokes. The new charter became effective December 7, 1945.

The commissioners voted to have Arnest serve as mayor and Walpole as vice mayor. John L. Early was appointed as the first municipal judge. J. E. Richards was made city auditor and clerk, and Charles H. Pickett, city treasurer, collector and assessor.

On December 28, 1945, the commissioners appointed a seven-man Citizens' Advisory Committee to act as an unofficial "cabinet" on matters of civic interest. Those named were: Homer Whitman, vice-president, Palmer National Bank & Trust Co.; A. L. Ellis, president, Sarasota State Bank; J. L. Bryant, president, Central Trades and Labor Union; C. L. McKaig; A. W. Knapp, former councilman and gasoline dealer; Frank G. Berlin, president of the Chamber of Commerce and president of Bay Drugs, and J. J. Williams, Jr., attorney.

On January 19, 1945, the commissioners appointed Ross E. Windom to be the first city manager. He took office February 1.

## POPULATION

The first census figures reported by the Federal Bureau of Census for the town of Sarasota was in 1910. At that time, 840 men, women and children lived in the town. By 1920, Sarasota had a population of 2,149. During the Roaring Twenties the population increased, by 1930, to 8,398. The 1940 census fixed the total at 11,141. The Seventh Census of the State of Florida, made by state employes in 1945, showed that the city had grown to 13,857.

Sarasota County, which came into existence July 1, 1921, was shown by the federal census of 1930 to have a population of 12,440. The 1940 total was 16,106. The state census of 1945 gave the county's population as 19,202.

## FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

In early 1933, during the depths of the Great Depression, bank deposits in Sarasota totalled less than \$1,500,000. And that figure included deposits tied up when the Ringling Bank & Trust Co. went into voluntary liquidation, August 29, 1932. (See Chapter X).

By January 1, 1946, deposits in the two Sarasota banks and the savings and investment accounts in the First Federal Savings & Loan Association, totalled \$19,202,859.26. And the resources of the three financial institutions totalled \$20,082,143.54.

The tremendous increase in deposits and savings during the 14-year period provides striking proof of Sarasota's recovery from the double blow of the bursting of the Florida bubble and the national depression.

### PALMER NATIONAL BANK & TRUST CO.

The Palmer National Bank & Trust Co. was established in July, 1929, immediately after the crash of the First Bank & Trust Co. Its original officers were: Potter Palmer, chairman of the board; John B. Cleveland, president; B. H. Meadows, cashier, and F. C. Harrison, assistant cashier. The directors were: Potter Palmer, F. H. Guenther, George B. Howell, John B. Cleveland, C. P. Hoglund, and R. K. Thompson. The bank opened July 20, 1929, in the building it now occupies. On December 31, 1929, its deposits were \$338,000. Six years later they increased to \$1,618,587.29. By December 31, 1945, they climbed to \$10,828,244.33.

Officers of the bank in 1946 were: Honore Palmer, chairman of the board; B. W. Powell, president; H. W. Whitman, executive vice-president and cashier; P. H. Hanson, vice-president and trust officer; Donald S. Mackintosh, assistant cashier, and A. H. Bayless, assistant cashier. The directors were: Honore Palmer, B. W. Powell, H. W. Whitman, Charles Dempsey, and C. L. McKaig.

Resources of the bank on December 31, 1945, totalled \$11,411,823.83.

### SARASOTA STATE BANK

The Sarasota State Bank was incorporated July 7, 1939, and opened for business December 4, 1939, with paid in capital of \$60,000 and surplus of \$15,000. The deposits on the first day totalled \$74,719.90.

The first officers of the bank were J. C. Cardwell, president; J. R. Peacock and G. C. Rankin, vice-presidents, and Paul V. Hale, cashier. The original board of directors included the above officers and T. J. Bell, Charles Lichte, George V. Booker, and J. J. Williams, Jr.

Growth of the bank is indicated by the growth in deposits. On December 30, 1939, they totalled \$165,368.81; on December 31, 1940, \$608,645.13; on December 31, 1943, \$2,714,778.27, and on December 31, 1945, \$6,324,258.27. The bank's resources on December 31, 1945, were \$6,458,202.55.

Officers of the bank in 1946 were: J. C. Cardwell, chairman of the board; A. L. Ellis, president; J. R. Peacock and Brown Austin, vice-presidents, and Hampton A. Moore, cashier. Directors were: Brown Austin, T. J. Bell, George V. Booker, J. C. Cardwell, G. C. Rankin, A. L. Ellis, Gerald E. Ludwig, J. E. Moore, J. C. Peacock, and J. J. Williams, Jr.

### FIRST FEDERAL SAVINGS & LOAN ASSOCIATION

The First Federal Savings & Loan Association was incorporated under the laws of the United States June

19, 1934. Its first officers were: W. G. Shepard, president; B. C. Kickliter, vice-president; J. A. Maahs, secretary; J. E. Moore, treasurer, and J. J. Williams, Jr., attorney. Organized with a capital of \$2,500 it had assets in 1946 totalling \$2,213,117.16.

The association has been instrumental in building a large percentage of the new homes in Sarasota since its organization. The objects of the association are to promote thrift by providing a convenient and safe method for people to save and invest money and to provide for the sound and economical financing of homes.

Shepard has served as president since the organization of the association. Maahs served as secretary until his death in 1939 when he was succeeded by T. R. Culler. In 1946, officers were: W. G. Shepard, president; B. C. Kickliter, first vice-president; J. T. Blalock, second vice-president; T. R. Culler, executive vice-president and secretary, Mrs. Adda Maahs, assistant secretary and treasurer, and J. J. Williams, Jr., Dr. O. H. Cribbins, Charles Hull Ewing, Richard E. Lindsay and Ivey C. Taylor also are directors.

The association's resources climbed to \$614,699.25 by December 31, 1939; to \$1,578,759.18 by December 31, 1943, and to \$2,213,117.16 by December 31, 1945.

### VENICE — NOKOMIS BANK

The Venice-Nokomis Bank was organized in 1925 by Dr. Fred H. Albee, who became president. A. L. Joiner and A. W. Bell were vice-presidents and Bart W. Sharbrough, cashier. M. L. Townsend, Irving M. Shaw, Albert E. Blackburn and Sidney R. Perry also served on the board of directors. The bank was first located in Nokomis; it was moved to Venice February 22, 1927.

Dr. Albee continued to serve as president until his death February 16, 1945. In July, 1945, Robert S. Baynard was elected president. Other officers in 1946 were James T. Blalock, vice-president; A. L. Blalock, cashier, and Bina Mae Moore, assistant cashier. Directors were Baynard, Mildred M. Baynard, Stephen Albee, James T. Blalock, and J. J. Williams, Jr. On December 31, 1945, the bank had deposits of \$1,076,332.84 and resources totalling \$1,118,059.17. Its loans and discounts totalled \$84,248.

## PUBLIC UTILITIES

The development of public utilities in Sarasota has been discussed in detail in the general text. The following summaries are given to serve for reference.

### LIGHT AND POWER

A franchise to provide Sarasota with electric light and power was granted to H. P. Porter and Associates at a special election, April 8, 1909; vote 31 to 4. Porter formed the Sarasota Ice & Electric Co. R. E. Ludwig was manager for many years. Power was turned on early in 1910, but only from dusk to midnight—and no lights on moonlit nights.

On December 11, 1911, "breakfast service" was provided for early risers, power being turned on from 4 a. m. to 6 a. m. daily. An "ironing service" on Tuesdays and Fridays, from 7 to 11 a. m., was provided June 9, 1916, to accommodate housewives. All night service was started November 1, 1916.

An \$80,000 bond issue for purchasing the privately owned plant and building a new municipal plant was approved 42 to 12 at a special election December 23, 1918. City took over plant June 20, 1919.

The ice manufacturing plant of the Sarasota Ice & Electric Co. was sold in November, 1919, to the Excelsior Ice Co., of Bradenton, and the name changed to Sarasota Ice & Cold Storage Co.

On November 26, 1919, the voters approved a \$35,000 bond issue for extending electric light lines and completing municipal plant, built by Fairbanks-Morse Co. The plant was accepted by city March 19, 1920, and 24-hour service was provided for the first time Monday, June 21, 1920.

Due to the rapid growth of Sarasota during the boom, the municipal plant soon proved inadequate and early in 1925, the city sold \$350,000 worth of bonds to build a new plant, on N. Orange Avenue near 18th Street, and \$125,000 more bonds to make extensions.

Before the new plant was completed, the city decided to sell its municipally owned system for \$1,000,000 to the Florida Power & Light Co. to obtain money to build a deep water harbor. The sale was approved 461 to 214 at a special election January 12, 1926. Joe H. Gill, vice-president of the company, gave the city a check for \$1,000,000 March 4, 1926. The company immediately began construction of high voltage transmission lines to tie the Sarasota area into its inter-connected network served by great base-load generating plants. Service was extended to Fruitville and shortly afterward to Venice.

During the summer of 1945, the Florida Power & Light Co. started the construction of a new 18,000 Kw. steam turbine generating plant at Payne Terminal. It was placed in operation January 18, 1946. The plant is of sufficient capacity to carry the load of the whole West Coast division. Provision has been made for adding a second unit later, with a 30,000 Kw. capacity, which the company anticipates will be needed within the next decade.

Since acquiring the municipal plant, the Florida Power & Light Co. has increased the number of connections from 3350 to 6428, as a result of the growth of the city and the extension of lines into suburban areas.

## WATER

For a quarter century after the founding of Sarasota, residents of the town obtained water from wells, cisterns or from the artesian well "on the triangle" at Five Points drilled in 1886 by the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co. Finally, on April 4, 1911, the voters approved a \$20,000 bond issue for building a water works and sewerage system. G. W. Blackburn, T. A. Jones and C. C. McGinty were elected bond trustees. The contract was awarded to American Light and Water Co.

Water and sewer mains were laid in the central portion of the town during 1911 and an artesian well was dug on the southeast corner of Sixth Street and Lemon Avenue. \$15,000 more for the water system was approved October 30, 1912; also \$15,000 more for sewers.

The water obtained from the city-drilled well proved unsatisfactory and on July 20, 1914, the city council voted to buy an artesian well at Pineapple and Lemon owned by J. Louis Houle (q.v.) A second well on the Houle lot was drilled in October, 1914. This well was 450 feet deep. Water from both wells was of good quality. From 1914 to 1926, the city issued \$240,000 more bonds for extending the water system and also for building a new water plant and reservoir, authorized June 15, 1926, on N. Orange Avenue.

During the depression, a federal grant of \$50,000 was obtained to help construct a soft water plant as a PWA project. The plant, which cost \$90,157, was built by Ivey H. Smith Co., Jacksonville, work being started November 16, 1937. When completed, the plant had a capacity of a million gallons of water a day, softened to a hardness of six grains per gallon.

During 1938, a \$138,000 WPA project was approved for building a 250,000 gallon steel tank reservoir near the hospital. The project also provided for laying 75,000 feet of water pipe of various sizes and installing 38 fire hydrants. A total of 250 men were employed on the project for six months.

On February 18, 1946, the city commission employed Smith and Gillespie, Jacksonville consulting engineers, to prepare construction drawings and specifications, for increasing the city's water supply. The initial project planned was the doubling of the capacity of the soft water plant and also the extension of lines to Bay Island, a residential section on Siesta Key included in the city limits.

The city commissioners also had under consideration plans for modernizing the existing sewerage system by making extensions into outlying districts and by building disposal plants.

## TELEPHONES

Telephone service between Sarasota and the outside world was established in the fall of 1899 when a "ground line" was strung from Manatee, pine trees being used principally for telephone poles. The first call came through on November 9. Two phones were installed, one in the postoffice—a small building on the southwest corner of Main and Pineapple, and the second in the office of Harry L. Higel.

The line to Sarasota was owned by the Gulf Coast Telephone Co., a subsidiary of the Tampa and Manatee River Telegraph & Telephone Co., incorporated in 1896. C. L. Reaves later paid for having the line extended to Fruitville and A. M. Wilson to have it extended from Fruitville to Myakka.

On February 10, 1903, the town council of Sarasota granted a 30-year franchise to the Peninsular Telephone Co., which had been founded a short time before by W. G. Brorein. New lines were strung and an exchange was installed in the postoffice building,

with Carrie S. Abbe as local manager and Mamie Woodruff first operator. The exchange went into operation August 10, 1903, under the supervision of W. U. Lathrop, company superintendent who had gotten the franchise from the council.

When the "stone block" building, now known as Badger Pharmacy building, was erected in 1905 on the southwest corner of Main and Pineapple, the exchange occupied part of the second floor. Lines were extended to Siesta Key in 1912. During 1919, the company strung more than 100 miles of new lines to replace the old type grounded lines. Two lines were strung to Osprey, one to Venice and one to Manasota, a lumber camp community south of Venice. In Sarasota, underground cables were installed. By November 1, 1919, there were 231 phones in Sarasota and 98 in the remainder of the county.

In 1922, the telephone building on Mira Mar Court was erected and in 1923, the automatic exchange was put in service. At that time there were 476 subscribers. By 1927, the number had increased to 2662, showing the phenomenal growth of the city during the boom. During the Great Depression, in 1933, the number of subscribers dropped to 1689, but since then the number has increased rapidly. In September, 1945, there were 4402 subscribers in Sarasota alone.

### GAS

The Southern Gas & Electric Corporation, of which John A. Reed was first president, received a franchise from Sarasota in June, 1926, to provide gas for the city. The company bought the gas plant in Bradenton, then owned by that city, and laid pipes to Sarasota in 1927. Gas was turned on December 28, 1927. Despite the depression, the company continued to extend mains to the principal built-up sections of the city.

In 1935, W. L. Adams and associates took over the property. In 1940, the company added tank gas, known as "Southgas" to take care of the suburban districts. Officials of the company in 1946 were W. L. Adams, president; A. J. Lawlor, vice-president, and J. C. Walker, secretary-assistant treasurer.

### GREEN'S FUEL

Gas for cooking, heating and other purposes also is provided by Green's Fuel, Inc., a concern which originated in Sarasota and now has distributors in all the southeastern states. See Index, Green's Fuel, Inc.

### RADIO

Sarasota first "went on the air" Monday night, February 14, 1927, when a hook-up was made with Radio Station WDAE, in Tampa, from El Vernona Hotel. John Ringling was the principal speaker; Jules Brazil, official announcer, and music was furnished by the Czecho-Slovakian Band. On the second broadcast, February 21, which had to be postponed twice because of static, C. L. Knight, publisher of the Akron Beacon-Journal, spoke on the subject "Sarasota as a Recreation Center."

In December, 1927, the Chamber of Commerce purchased Radio Station WJBB from J. E. Dadswell, formerly of St. Petersburg, who brought the station here from Tampa. Towers were erected in Payne Park. The first program was broadcast December 11 from a studio in the Sarasota Terrace Hotel. The principal speaker was L. R. Powell, president of the Seaboard. Other speakers were John Ringling, Ralph C. Caples, C. E. Hitchings, Louis Lancaster, Samuel W. Gumpertz, and George D. Lindsay.

The Chamber of Commerce was forced to give up the station January 28, 1929, in order to reduce expenses.

Station WSPB went on the air Tuesday, December 7, 1939. The broadcasting station, erected on City Island, was said to cost more than \$40,000. Officials of the company were S. H. Campbell, Jr., F. S. Lane, S. C. Hutcheson and R. C. Jones, Jr. The station was formally dedicated January 1, 1940. WSPB joined the Columbia Broadcasting Company on November 21, 1943. John Browning is now manager and part owner of the station.

### JUNGLE GARDENS

Jungle Gardens, known throughout the state as a wonderland of tropical beauty, was developed in 1939 by David B. Lindsay, Pearson Conrad and H. R. Taylor. It was opened to the public January 1, 1940. The developers added thousands of plants to those already found growing in their natural state. When the garden was opened, more than 3,000 varieties of flowers, shrubs and trees, many native and others imported for all parts of the world, were seen in the semi-tropical setting.

Many of the Jungle plantings came from nursery stock developed by Conrad who also planned and supervised the landscaping. Just how long the well-nigh impenetrable jungle had remained undisturbed before workmen cut their way through the tangled mass of growth is a matter of conjecture. A. B. Edwards recalled picking bunches of bananas from trees in the area more than 50 years before. He also recalled killing a bear in the same section.

Development of the Jungle has progressed steadily since 1939. At present, more than 75 varieties of palm trees are growing there, as well as gorgeous gardenias, lavish Hawaiian hibiscus, banana trees, British Guiana sea grape trees, colorful azaleas, rubber trees, mammoth elephant ears, odd appearing screw pines, many varieties of roses, and countless varieties of ferns including the stately Australian fern tree and flowering vines.

Here and there one comes across a placid pool in which brightly colored fish dart beneath water lilies floating on the surface. Miniature waterfalls splash into some of the pools which meander away in streams crossed by rustic bridges. At intervals are found seats where visitors may pause as they contemplate the wonders and beauties of nature, given a helping hand by man.

## WARM SALT SPRINGS

Fountains of Youth, reputed to contain the magic waters sought by Ponce de Leon way back in 1512, have been "discovered" during the past 50 years in almost every part of Florida, usually to gain publicity for the particular locality in which they were spotted.

A thorough study of documents in the Library of Congress and in the Vatican in Rome, made in recent years by Dr. Jonas Miller and his collaborators, indicates that the fountain for which De Leon sought was here in Sarasota County, about 28 miles southeast of Sarasota and about two miles north of the Tamiami Trail. It is known locally as Salt Springs, or Warm Salt Springs.

The first white man who ever saw the springs, according to old documents, was Friar Juan Ortiz who had been captured by the Indians in the Florida keys in 1509 and taken up the coast to where the springs gushed from the earth. The friar, in a letter to De Leon, gave an exact description of the spot as it now exists and also told of the curative powers of the water. As a result of the friar's letter, De Leon made two trips to find the springs, but never succeeded.

For the past 50 years, people from many parts of the West Coast have traveled to Warm Springs to bathe in its water. They declare the water helps to cure rheumatism, neuritis, various skin infections, and sore eyes. Also, that it has a laxative quality and is weight-reducing.

The springs were owned for many years by Mrs. Lilly G. Brown, of Philadelphia. At one time she refused \$250,000 for the property, which included 450 acres. In March, 1945, she sold the property to F. W. Wagner and Nick Corbisella, of Rochester, N. Y., for \$60,000. Plans were well advanced in 1946 for establishing a Healthorium at the springs, the development to cost approximately \$100,000.

## BURIED TREASURE

Back in 1924, a slovenly, shiftless fellow and his wife moved into a shack on Siesta Key. They lived and dressed like tramps. Neither liked to work—and neither did. But one day in October, the man showed a neighbor a handful of gold coins and hinted mysteriously about having found a buried treasure chest. A few days later, he bought a new automobile, and many clothes for himself and his wife—and then he disappeared.

That's just one of the buried treasure stories which are part of the waterfront lore of Sarasota. If only half of the stories were true, enough treasure would have been unearthed on the keys along the coast to pay off the city's bonded debt. Unfortunately, not one of the stories can be verified.

The fact is, all the substantiated treasure hunt stories have a tragic ending—much money spent, and no treasure found.

For instance, in May, 1926, a syndicate headed by George Wilhelm, of Bradenton, leased a dredge, employed deep sea divers, and started hunting for the "Leftie Pirates' horde of gold" which Wilhelm was

convinced had been buried near the Point of Rocks. Thousands of dollars were spent by the syndicate in search of the pirates' chest, supposed to contain \$4,000,000 in gold, but, alas and alack, it was never found.

Years later, W. G. Shepard and A. R. "Pop" Filson also went on a treasure hunting expedition after they had received "positive proof" that it had been buried near Placida, out in the Gulf. After weeks of arduous toil, they finally hauled to the surface an oblong, shell-encrusted object which had every appearance of being a treasure chest. But it wasn't. It was just a shell-encrusted rock. They gave up the search in disgust.

Others have since sought buried treasures—but if they found it, they kept it secret.

## MYAKKA STATE PARK

The Myakka River region, famed throughout Florida for its scenery of exquisite beauty, has been a magnet for hunters, anglers and campers for more than three-quarters of a century, ever since the Land of Sarasota began to be settled. Some of the oldest camping grounds in the entire Florida West Coast are located along the banks of the winding river and of Upper and Lower Myakka lakes.

The history of the region, so far as its modern development is concerned, goes back to 1910 when A. B. Edwards took Mrs. Potter Palmer in a horse and buggy on an inspection trip to the river and lakes.

Mrs. Palmer was enchanted with the virginal beauty of the semi-tropical wonderland, with its towering palms, with the giant oaks and their trailing drapery of Spanish moss, and with the rich pastures and hundreds of grazing cattle. She declared that while she had traveled widely and visited most of the famous scenic spots in the world, she had never seen a place more charming.

Before the inspection trip was over, Mrs. Palmer expressed a desire to buy a 6,000-acre ranch, owned by Garrett Murphy, which took in a large part of the most beautiful land. A short time later the purchase was completed. With the land, Mrs. Palmer bought 3,000 head of cattle. She named the tract "Meadow Sweet Pastures." Later Mrs. Palmer had a camp built at the end of Upper Myakka Lake. Small portable bungalows were constructed there, an electric power system was installed, and Mrs. Palmer went there often for rest and relaxation.

The establishment of a state park in the Myakka region was a dream for many years of Edwards and the late Judge Paul C. Albritton. Together, they worked untiringly to convince state officials that the section was a priceless heritage of Florida and that means must be devised whereby it could become publicly owned.

Finally, in September, 1934, they succeeded in persuading the Internal Improvement Board of the state to purchase 17,500 acres from the estate of Adrian C. Honore, a brother of the late Mrs. Potter Palmer. Then, two weeks later, 1920 acres, comprising the most beautiful part of the whole Myakka River valley, was deeded to the state for park purposes by Hon-

ore Palmer and Potter Palmer, as an outright gift in memory of their mother. This particular tract extended on both sides of the Sugar Bowl Road which crosses the valley between the Upper and Lower Lakes, and was known as "The Old Picnic Grounds."

Then Edwards and Albritton took steps to obtain the remainder of the needed land, including the Lower Lake and the subterranean spring, owned by the heirs of J. F. and S. E. Curry, of Manatee. Finally, this vital area, comprising 9,000 acres, was acquired.

During the winter of 1934-35, development of the park was started by CCC workers under the direction of C. H. Schaeffer, acting director of the park services. The work continued until shortly before Pearl Harbor. Approximately 250 men were employed for over six years. They built roads and bridges, dug drainage ditches, cut out underbrush and constructed pavilions, cabins, rest rooms, barns, garages, a gate house and concession buildings. It is reported the work cost more than \$4,000,000.

The state now owns approximately 28,000 acres in the Myakka region. Of this, about 8,700 acres have been dedicated for park purposes and the remaining 19,300 acres have been set aside as a state forest.

The park was officially dedicated February 28, 1941, and was opened to the public June 1, 1942. The first park superintendent was Ormond Summers. He was succeeded by Oscar Baynard, who served a year and a half and was followed by the present superintendent, Allen E. Crowley, a descendent of one of the pioneer families of the Myakka region.

Development of the park was retarded by the war but in 1946 plans had been completed for carrying on the work and making the park one of the largest, most beautiful and most attractive in the entire South.

### POST OFFICE

The first postoffice in the present city limits of Sarasota was established August 16, 1878, in the old community of Sara Sota on what is now Osprey Avenue, a mile and a half south of Main Street. Charles E. Abbe was the first postmaster. He served until he was murdered by the Vigilantes December 27, 1884. He was succeeded by his widow, Charlotte R. Abbe.

In 1886, the post office was moved to the new town of Sarasota and located in Whitakers' Store on lower Main. Robert Scott was the first postmaster. He served only a few months and was succeeded by C. C. Whitaker, who also served only a few months. In 1887 he was succeeded by Robert Greer who moved the post office to his home on N. Pineapple Avenue, near Seventh.

Mr. Greer died on October 30, 1891, and was followed by Mrs. Carrie S. Abbe who served 31 years, until August 16, 1922. While Mrs. Abbe was postmistress, the post office was moved five or six times. It was located for longest periods at Cason's Store, at the foot of Main Street, and on the southwest corner of Main and Pineapple, first in a plank shack and then in the stone block building now known as the Badger Pharmacy Building.

Mrs. Abbe was succeeded by John W. Philip. He served a short time and was followed by Jesse Tucker, as acting postmaster. In the late spring of 1923, the post office was moved to the Cummer Arcade, just completed by A. E. Cummer. Homer T. Welch was named postmaster July 16, 1923 and served until October 31, 1933. He was succeeded by L. D. Reagin who served until July 31, 1945, when he retired because of ill health. Jesse Tucker again was named acting postmaster.

The present postoffice was completed and occupied November 10, 1934. It cost \$110,000.

### SARASOTA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Back in 1907, members of the Town Improvement Society succeeded in raising a fund of \$65. With so much money on hand, the women members of the society debated how it should be spent—whether it should be used to buy a hearse for the town or to establish a library. After long arguments, the library advocates won out and Sarasota's first library came into existence, December 7, 1907.

A room for the library was given free of charge by J. Hamilton Gillespie in the "stone block building" on the southwest corner of Main and Pineapple. The library remained there nine years. About 300 books were donated by Gillespie; others were obtained at "book showers." Finally, about 600 books were obtained. At first, the library was open just Saturday afternoon and evening; later it also was opened on Wednesday afternoon.

The Woman's Club took over the library in 1914 and operated it until 1940 when it was taken over by the city. The library was maintained in the Woman's Club building from 1915 until 1932 when it was moved to the old red brick school building on Main. In 1941 it was moved to its present home in Bayfront Park, into a building erected by John Tuttle Chidsey, winter resident from Bristol, Conn., at a cost of \$18,500, and donated to the city. The library was furnished by the Junior Chamber of Commerce at a cost of \$6,500. The building was dedicated November 13, 1941.

Women who served as librarians from 1907 to 1914 were Miss Sarah Young, Mrs. Jessie D. Crosby, Mrs. G. W. Franklin and Mrs. F. W. Schultz. Miss Nellie Spiers was the first full-time librarian and served during 1915 and 1916. She was succeeded by Mrs. Janet Farmer, who served until Mrs. C. A. Service, Jr., the present librarian, was appointed in 1927.

In 1946, the library had a collection of approximately 18,000 books and was directed by a board headed by Rev. George Foster.

### RINGLING ART SCHOOL

The Ringling School of Art is an outgrowth of the John and Mable Ringling Junior College and School of Art which was dedicated with impressive ceremonies October 2, 1931, when the Ringling museum first was opened to the public. Dr. Ludd M. Spivey, president of Southern College, was the first president of the school which was intended to be a

branch of the college. This arrangement proved unsatisfactory. Mr. Ringling severed his connection with the school and it was incorporated May 15, 1933 as an independent institution with Verman Kimbrough as president. The Junior College was discontinued in 1935. Since then the art school has provided only such academic subjects as art students might want. The school operated at capacity during 1945-46, attracting art students from all parts of the country.

## VENICE — NOKOMIS

The sister communities of Venice and Nokomis are located in the section originally known as Horse and Chaise, first settled by Jesse Knight (q.v.) For several years in the mid Eighties the locality was known as Eyre—several old maps give it as "Eryr". The name Venice was approved by the government when a post office was established in 1888 with Darwin O. Curry as the first postmaster. The name Nokomis was adopted for the old community after the Seaboard had extended its tracks through the settlement and built a station "way down in the sticks." (See General Text.)

Eagle Point, on Roberts Bay, was made into a widely-known winter resort before World War I by Mike Evans who succeeded in inducing scores of nationally known celebrities and sportsmen to be his guests.

In 1920, Dr. Fred Houdlett Albee, internationally-famed orthopaedic, bone and joint surgeon, began buying large tracts of land in the Venice-Nokomis region and in 1921 erected the Pollyanna Inn, at Nokomis, which was formally opened January 8, 1922. He soon afterward organized the Venice-Nokomis Chamber of Commerce and in 1925 organized the Venice-Nokomis Bank.

The present city of Venice was built by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers in 1925-27 at an estimated cost of \$16,000,000. (See General Text) The city was incorporated by the state legislature late in 1926 and the first meeting of the city officials, appointed by the governor, was held December 9, 1926. Edward L. Worthington was the mayor and Charles S. Brearley, R. L. Welliver and H. N. Wimmer, councilmen.

For a number of years after the end of the Big Boom, Venice was almost a ghost city. However, its excellent location and the fact that it had been well laid out ultimately caused it to come to life again. During the summer of 1932, the Venice and San Marco Hotels were acquired by the Kentucky Military Institute, of Lyndon, Ky., and during the winter of 1932-33, the Institute began sending its students to Venice for the winter term.

On November 15, 1933, Dr. Albee established the Florida Medical Center in Venice, taking over the Park View Hotel. He brought his patients to Venice each winter from then until the government took over his institution for use as a hospital for the Venice Air Base during World War II.

During the depression era, a large part of the railroad brotherhood's former holdings in the Venice area were acquired by Dr. Albee. In June, 1945, a syndicate

of St. Petersburg business men headed by Robert S. Baynard purchased most of these holdings from Dr. Albee's widow. It was reported that 14,000 acres were acquired for \$400,000 and that the deal included large portions of the city of Venice, the town of Nokomis, parts of the residential developments of Bay Point and Treasure Island, and 12,000 acres of farm lands. The purchase did not include any of the buildings used by the Kentucky Military Institute or the Florida Medical Center.

Mrs. Helga Roess-Side has been city clerk of Venice since 1931.

## ENGLEWOOD

The town of Englewood at the extreme southern end of Sarasota County, on Lemon Bay, was established in 1896 by Herbert N. Nichols, of Chicago, who named it after a Chicago suburb. The town plat was recorded August 17, 1896.

Nichols advertised the community widely and in 1897 organized a company which built a 40-room hotel on the shore of Lemon Bay called the Englewood Inn. The development of the section was retarded, however, by a complete lack of transportation facilities and for many years Englewood was nothing but a fishing hamlet. The hotel burned about 1910.

During the Florida Boom, the community spurted ahead briefly and a bank and several new stores were opened. However, the bank failed during the crash and all except one of the stores closed. In 1946, Englewood showed indications of being on the verge of the development which inevitably will come, sooner or later, because of the superb location of the community and the public-spiritedness of its residents.

## CHURCHES

Perhaps no one ever will know for sure the exact date of the founding of the first church in the Land of Sarasota, or which denomination founded it. Some of the oldest settlers say the honor should go to the Methodists; others, that it should go to the Missionary Baptists. All available data indicates that the latter denomination completed a church, and began holding services in it, a few months ahead of the Methodists.

Two of the earliest settlers were deeply religious men. Jesse Knight, who founded Horse and Chaise, was a Methodist. Isaac A. Redd, founder of Bee Ridge, was a Missionary Baptist.

During the early Seventies, the two alternated in conducting services at Bee Ridge and Horse and Chaise, now known as the Venice-Nokomis region. The services were held in the homes of pioneers. As the number of settlers increased, the need for regular places of worship became apparent.

In 1876, Redd led a movement to build a log church a little south of Bee Ridge. He was aided by John Tippet, Henry Surgenier and Sebe Rawls. When the tiny building was completed, "noses were counted" and it was learned that in the community there were fifteen Missionary Baptists and three Methodists.

So the church was called the Bee Ridge Missionary Baptist Church.

While this church was being erected at Bee Ridge, Jesse Knight and the members of his large family, aided by neighbors, built a plank church at what is now Nokomis. When completed, it was used by the Methodists, with Knight as pastor.

In 1887, a second Missionary Baptist Church was erected in Fruitville. It was constructed by C. L. Reaves, John Tatum, Stephen Goins, and Jesse, Frank and Emmett Tucker. They were assisted by Isaac Redd who by then had become a minister.

The original churches at Bee Ridge, Horse and Chaise and Fruitville were replaced many years ago by more modern structures. Their congregations have continued to meet each Sunday, without interruption, and today the descendants of the early pioneers are as staunch in their faith as any of the original members.

### FIRST METHODIST CHURCH

In the early days of the town of Sarasota, church services were held on the first floor of a two-story frame building on the northwest corner of Main and Pineapple. J. Hamilton Gillespie, an Episcopalian, acted as lay reader occasionally, and every month or so Rev. George Glazier, or Rev. E. F. Bates, Methodist circuit riders of Manatee, came down on horseback to conduct services.

In 1891, the Methodists decided to have a church of their own. It was organized by the Rev. William B. Tresca of Manatee in October with 12 charter members: Mr. and Mrs. John Helveston, Mrs. Lulu Helveston, Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Gocio, Mrs. Mary Drew, Mrs. Isadora Spencer, Mrs. Helen Pinard, Peter Crocker, Miss Fanny Crocker, L. J. Knight and P. K. Johnston. A vacant storeroom on lower Main was used as a meeting place.

On September 15, 1892, a large lot on the southeast corner of Main and Pineapple was donated to the church by Harry L. Higel. A small plain building was erected on the site in 1893, the first services being conducted by the Rev. A. O. Brown. In 1897 a parsonage on Seventh near Central was purchased. About this same time members raised funds to buy a bell for which they built a belfry on the church and added a steeple. Working still harder, they raised funds to buy paint and the "Little White Church at Five Points" came into existence.

The Woman's Missionary Society was organized in 1903 by Mrs. I. S. Patterson and Mrs. Hamden S. Smith.

During the following decade, the church membership grew steadily. By 1911 it became obvious that a larger church was needed. The congregation sold the Five Points site to J. H. Lord for \$1600, and Lord moved the church building to a vacant lot on Pineapple avenue. Plans were started immediately to erect a new structure on the Pineapple Avenue site, and it was completed in 1914 at a cost of \$10,000. This church is now in the heart of Sarasota's business district; consequently, the Methodists have always had a "down town" church.

Pastors of the church have been: William B. Tresca, A. O. Brown, Roy Bradford, E. J. Hardee, D. C. McRae, W. R. Wagoner, E. A. Townsend, U. S. Tabor, John E. Mickler, W. F. Allen, S. Grady, T. H. Sistrunk, J. A. Morrow, H. C. Hardin, I. W. Longacre, A. C. McCall, J. L. Jerdine, E. Watt Smith, J. S. Purcell, H. A. Spencer, J. D. Hurt, H. J. Haeflinger, R. E. Rutland, L. D. Lowe, G. S. Roberts, J. E. Ellis, E. Watt Smith, George A. Foster and Jack A. Davis.

Early in 1943 a new parsonage was purchased at 1191 S. Osprey, and the old parsonage was taken over by the young people as a youth center, the pastor reserving one room for his study.

Trustees of the church in 1946 were: G. L. Thacker, John Fite Robertson, H. S. Smith, C. E. Hitchings, J. M. Mason, T. W. Yarbrough, C. L. McKaig, J. C. Cardwell and Clyde Wilson. Stewards were: Mrs. J. H. Blackshear, J. C. Cardwell, R. K. Carruth, J. R. Evans, Lee V. Guthrie, W. C. Kennedy, Mrs. M. F. Kicklighter, J. M. Mason, C. H. Pickett, John Fite Robertson, C. R. Shannon, G. L. Thacker, Mrs. Marvin Walker, Sibley White, C. E. Hitchings, Sam D. Hill, Mrs. C. B. Wilson, C. L. McKaig, M. E. Cox and John Blackmore. Sunday School Superintendent was J. M. Mason.

### CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER (EPISCOPAL)

An Episcopal mission was founded in Sarasota by the late J. Hamilton Gillespie in 1886 and for several years meetings were held in his home, and later in the town meeting house at the northwest corner of Main and Pineapple streets. In 1904, the little congregation of 12 members built a small church on Pineapple street near Sixth. This building was moved to the corner of Strawberry and Palm avenues in 1906. After having spent about \$300 in remodeling the structure it was found that the property on which it stood was mortgaged. This caused a little trouble among the congregation until Bishop Gray came here and bought the present site for \$500 from the bishop's fund.

The small building was moved to the new site at the corner of Orange and Morrill avenues in 1908, at which time an addition was made and the original structure is now used as a chancellery.

Unfortunately all early records pertaining to the church have been lost and present officers are unable to give exact information regarding the early activities of the church or its rectors. Some of the older members recall the names of the following ministers: Rev. Ticnor, Rev. Canon Bryan, Dr. Nash, and Rev. J. J. Neighbor. More recently the ministers have been: Huber W. Weller, G. H. L. Thomas, William A. Lillycrop, Reginald Wells Eastman and John Harvey Soper.

A mission was established in Venice in 1935 by Charles H. Reach and James O. Gardner who had been appointed by the Men's Club of the church to assist Rev. Lillycrop in the work. During the next four years, the little group met in a vacant store building and services were conducted by laymen. St. Mark's Mission was erected in 1939. Rev. T. DeWitt Dowling, a retired minister, served as priest in charge until 1946

when he was succeeded by Dr. Leonard Stryker. Officers in 1946 were: Col. A. J. Brandon, senior warden; Phil A. Huguenin, junior warden; H. S. Taylor, treasurer, and W. E. Evans, secretary.

### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

The First Baptist Church was organized March 23, 1902, with five charter members: Rev. Henry Messer, James Bates, Nathan Hayman, Mrs. Kiziah Messer and Mrs. Patsy Dancy. Rev. P. O. Miller was the first regularly elected pastor and James Bates the first clerk. In December, 1903, Rev. H. H. Norris was elected pastor and the Sunday School was organized in July, 1904, with the Rev. Messer as superintendent.

The first church building was erected on Eighth Street near Central Avenue in 1904 and was cleared of debt in 1911. The pastorium was built on an adjoining lot in 1912. The Baptist Young Peoples Union was organized in November, 1915, with Miss Caroline Tharp as president. The Woman's Missionary Union was organized in 1916 to succeed the Ladies' Aid Society, which had been founded in 1904.

In December, 1920, two lots at Adelia and Main were purchased for \$2,500. In October, 1923, a building committee was appointed consisting of C. M. Howard, W. E. Foreman, C. E. Wood, B. F. McCall, W. D. Thomas, T. S. Jenkins and J. N. Potter. The new church was completed at a cost of about \$30,000 and dedicated December 16, 1924, with Dr. S. B. Rogers preaching the dedicatory sermon. The pastorium at 535 Adelia Avenue was completed in January, 1925.

Pastors of the church have been: P. O. Miller, H. H. Norris, D. R. MacGregor, J. H. Tharp, E. J. Barber, T. J. Sparkman, H. A. Goering, C. H. Ferrell, S. G. Mullins, John R. Henry, Enoch Pickering, Dr. A. J. Beck, J. S. McLemore, Dr. J. P. Currin, Dr. Stewart Long, Dr. T. O. Reese, Dr. Andrew Caraker, Dr. Claude T. Ammerman, Dr. E. M. Stewart and Dr. H. C. Wayman.

The church was incorporated in August, 1919, while Dr. Beck was pastor.

Officers of the church in 1946 were: Dr. H. C. Wayman, pastor; W. P. Dozier, treasurer; T. R. Culler, treasurer of the building fund; A. D. Hinsey, financial secretary; Miss Alice Howard, clerk; Mrs. Clyde Wilson, organist; L. R. Baird, superintendent of Sunday School; Mrs. J. L. Moore, president W.M.U., and Miss Alice McCall, director B.Y.P.U.

### FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota was organized February 16, 1906 by the Rev. J. W. Roseborough, evangelist for the synod of Florida. There were eleven charter members: W. M. Grigsby, Mrs. Abbie Grigsby, K. M. Hebb, Mrs. Hattie Hebb, Mrs. M. A. Morris, Miss Mamie Morris, Mrs. Eva Saunders McCall, R. I. Kennedy, Mrs. Mary A. Harrison, Mrs. F. J. Morris and Miss Onie M. Grigsby. W. M. Grigsby and K. M. Hebb was the first deacon and the first Sunday School superintendent.

Rev. Charles Kingsley was the first acting pastor. K. M. Hebb, R. I. Kennedy and George B. Prime were the first trustees. The First Ladies Aid Society was organized in June, 1907. The first church building, a concrete block structure, was erected at Orange Avenue and Fifth Street, the cornerstone being laid November 22, 1908. The building was dedicated February 17, 1913.

During the boom years of 1925-26, the church was outgrown and services were held at various times in the Mira Mar Auditorium, Edwards Theatre, and the Golf Street school auditorium. Consequently, the original property was sold and another location secured at the east end of Oak Street. The first unit of the new church building was erected in the summer of 1928 and dedicated the following February. During the next few years, fourteen Sunday School rooms were added and a manse was secured.

Pastors of the church have been: Charles Kingsley, J. Frazer Cocks, C. W. Latham, Augustus E. Barnett, B. L. Bowman, Dr. John E. Abbott, and Dr. B. L. Bowman. Dr. Abbott ministered to the church while Dr. Bowman served as chaplain in the United States Army from September, 1942, to February, 1946. After Dr. Bowman's return, Dr. Abbott went to Miami.

In 1946 the church had a membership of approximately 500 and ministered to additional hundreds of tourists during the winter season. Three sons of the church are now ministers and two served as chaplains in World War II; a former superintendent of Sunday School served several years as a missionary in Mexico; two sons are ministerial candidates and two young women attended the Assembly's Training School for Lay Workers.

Sunday School superintendents since 1910 have been: K. M. Hebb, Frank Pearce, C. M. Howard, W. K. Wolf, Mr. Wright, C. W. Collier, Harold Hayworth, Paul Hanson and J. B. O'Neil.

### ST. MARTHA'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Prior to 1911, the eight Catholic families living in Sarasota were administered to by missionary Jesuits from Tampa. Two lots at Ninth and Adelia were donated as a site for a church in the fall of 1911 by Mrs. Martha Burns and a modest frame building was soon thereafter erected on the corner lot.

On August 26, 1912, John Savarese donated the proceeds of a moonlight boat ride aboard the "General Carr" to the church, and this money was used to pay for plastering the interior and to purchase some of the furnishings. A Jesuit missionary priest, Father Cox, attended the Mission of Sarasota at that time.

It was not until October 1, 1927, that the Most Reverend Patrick Barry, bishop of the Catholic Diocese of St. Augustine, sent the Reverend Charles L. Elslander to Sarasota as St. Martha's first pastor. In 1928 Mr. and Mrs. John J. Diggin of Dorchester, Mass., presented the church with a bungalow located on Thirteenth Street, to be used as the residence of the pastor. The rectory is now located on Adelia Avenue near Ninth.

St. Martha's little congregation grew rapidly during the following years. The pastor realized that a larger church was necessary and started a building fund in the early thirties. Additional property was purchased at the corner of Orange and Ninth Street.

Ground was broken for the new building on September 9, 1940, and the cornerstone was laid November 9, 1940. The church was sufficiently completed to permit the offering of the first Mass on Easter, 1941.

St. Martha's new church, constructed of light colored brick of the Spanish Renaissance type of architecture, with a seating capacity of six hundred, was dedicated on February 15, 1942, by the Most Reverend Joseph P. Hurley, Bishop of the Diocese of St. Augustine. This church, which was completely paid for by the end of 1945, was constructed at a cost of \$70,000. In the spring of 1946 a drive was launched to raise \$50,000 to be used in building a parochial school on the Orange avenue property just south of the church.

### FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST

In 1916, a small group of Christian Scientists began holding services in a private home. In the fall of 1924, application for recognition of the society by the mother church, the first Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Mass., was made and the church roll was signed by the members. Services were held in the Woman's Club auditorium.

By the fall of 1927 the group had grown sufficiently to apply to the mother church for recognition as a branch church. The present church building at Main Street and East Avenue was completed in October, 1930, at a cost of \$21,000. The first services were held there in December of that year. The auditorium has a seating capacity of 260 and a Sunday School is located in the rear.

Because of the ruling of the Christian Science organization that no church can be dedicated until it is free from debt, formal dedication services were delayed until Thanksgiving Day, 1935. The reading room at 301 S. Palm Avenue was established in the early days of the organization.

### FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The First Christian Church was organized on the city pier in June, 1926, with 60 members. The first pastor was Reverend Greenwell who remained with the congregation about six months. The church then moved to the red brick school building on Main Street and was without a pastor for about two years. It then moved to the Golf Street school building and called Rev. W. A. Harper as pastor in September, 1928.

Rev. Harper remained with the church until 1941 but during the last year of his ministry Rev. Robert Martin, of Bradenton, filled the pulpit. The church called Rev. Richard B. Cheatham to its ministry in 1941 and he remained until he became a chaplain in the army. He was succeeded by Rev. John W. Messer who remained with the church three years. Rev. Roy

S. Johnston, of Lexington, Ky., who served four years in the army as chaplain in World War II, becoming a major, became pastor of the church in April, 1946.

In 1932, the church purchased the American Legion property at Golf Street and Washington Blvd. It later remodeled the building, purchased additional lots, added Sunday School rooms and in 1946 completed a recreational building which also is used for Sunday School purposes.

Among the charter members of the church who still live in Sarasota are: Mr. and Mrs. Henry Hutchinson, Mrs. Daisy Ellis, Mrs. Glosser, Mrs. Gus K. Stevens and John Gillis. Among the most active early members, in addition to the above, were W. R. Warren, O. T. Hale and John J. Justice.

In 1946, the church had 150 members and the members of its official board were: H. O. Blasingame, chairman; Miss Grace Bills, secretary; A. M. Fisher, treasurer, and Dr. John M. Butcher, John T. Blanton, Mrs. A. Blair Frazee, Miss Laura Hammond, Mrs. Dan Frank, Woodrow Tucker, Powell Aldrich, W. O. Williams, Mrs. C. H. Downs, James Drymon, and R. C. Platt, Hollis Wagoner in 1946 was acting superintendent of the Bible School.

### SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH

The Second Baptist Church was organized in the spring of 1927 with 35 charter members as the outgrowth of a series of meetings held by Rev. Obert in a tent located in White City, on the old Bradenton Road at Riverside Drive. Later, services were held in a building on 33rd Street.

A few years later, during the pastorate of Rev. J. N. Potter, the church bought a lot on the old Bradenton Road at Cherokee Avenue and a building was moved in from another site. The church was enlarged and twelve class rooms added in 1935. Soon afterwards a Sunday School was established.

Pastors in addition to Obert and Potter have been: J. E. Trice, J. B. Powers, John N. Hudson, Henry S. Inabnit and Lawrence E. Hutto.

In 1946 the church had a membership of more than 500 and has acquired property valued at approximately \$20,000, including church buildings, Sunday school rooms and pastor's home. Since its organization a number of its young men have entered the ministry and are now serving as pastors in various sections of the country.

### TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM

Giving to members of the Jewish faith opportunity to worship and congregate in peaceful and beautiful surroundings, the Jewish Community Center, Temple Beth Sholom, is one of the finest edifices of this religion in the state.

Erected on Palm-studded Washington Boulevard, the building was erected in 1928 and stands as a monument to the faith of approximately fifteen families who then made up the congregation and membership. The building committee was composed of Phil H. Levy, Mrs. L. I. Freis, Mrs. Phil H. Levy, H. Nadelman, H. Sher, Max Greenburg, Harry Chilk and Wil-

liam Gold. The temple was formally dedicated February 24, 1929, by Dr. Adolph Speigel. Music was furnished by Miss Ruth Idelson, Mrs. L. I. Freis, Ike Baker and Miss Lillian Burton. Services are conducted every Friday night.

Jewish Memorial Park is a beautiful little cemetery located near the municipal golf course. It was founded in 1932 by P. H. Levy, Harry Chilk, William Gold, Harry Augustine, Arthur Collman and Joe Idelson.

## ORGANIZATIONS

### CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

"Hotels on the Manatee River are filled with northern visitors. Here in Sarasota, our hotels are empty. The reason is simple—we do not advertise. What Sarasota needs more than anything else is a progressive Board of Trade or Chamber of Commerce which will concentrate on telling the nation about our superb attractions."

So wrote Editor C. V. S. Wilson in his *Sarasota Times* early in 1901. Years were to pass, however, before his suggestion was heeded. In the fall of 1904 a Commercial Club was organized, with Harry L. Higel as president, but the organization was unable to obtain enough money even to pay for a secretary, to say nothing of conducting an advertising campaign.

"About all the club was able to do," recalls A. B. Edwards, "was to get behind such movements as having new boards laid on Main Street sidewalks or getting after the marshall to do something about the hogs wallowing in the mud around the water troughs in the center of town. We had the hogs with us for years afterward so I guess the club didn't accomplish much."

Finally, in November, 1911, a Board of Trade was organized with Owen Burns as president, Rev. J. Fraser Cocks as secretary, and A. B. Edwards treasurer. The roster of members included 37 men. The principal contributor of the Board was the Palmer Florida Company which pledged \$2,500 to defray the cost of printing and distributing a Sarasota folder. Frank Redd became secretary in May, 1912.

By December 5, 1913, the organization had increased its membership list to 205 and a banquet was held to celebrate the event at the Belle Haven Inn. W. A. Sumner, then president of the Board, and Dr. Jack Halton, vice-president, were the principal speakers. Dinner was served by members of the Woman's Club.

As a result of the national financial depression of 1914, activities of the Board came almost to a dead halt and it did not come to life again until the fall of 1916. It was then reorganized with J. H. Lord as president; I. R. Burns, vice-president and treasurer, and Dr. Barney Low, secretary. John F. Burkett, Harry L. Higel, Owen Burns and A. B. Edwards were elected to serve on the board of directors along with the officers. On November 15, 1916, the members chipped in to pay for a new city booklet to cost \$1,000 for 10,000 copies—printing was cheap in those days. J. H. Lord and A. C. Honore agreed to pay for

2,500 copies and Owen Burns for 500. Lord served two years as president and was succeeded by J. G. Archibald. Then W. Y. Perry was chosen to head the organization.

On November 24, 1920, following a reorganization meeting, the name of the organization was changed to the Sarasota County Chamber of Commerce. Officers were: Hamden S. Smith, president; C. N. Payne, honorary president; A. L. Joiner, vice-president, and Iron Ross, treasurer. Members of the board of governors were: W. Y. Perry, Elmer Whittle, L. L. May, George B. Prime, Mrs. C. N. Thompson, Mrs. F. H. Guenther, A. B. Edwards, S. W. Longmire, J. E. Battle, I. G. Archibald, Edson Keith, F. A. Walpole, C. E. Hitchings, Mrs. C. V. S. Wilson, F. H. Guenther, S. E. Olson, W. M. Tuttle, Otis F. Landers, Dr. Joseph Halton, J. Hamilton Gillespie, and J. H. Lord. Walter M. Ford, of Chicago, was appointed full time secretary.

To relate the activities of the Chamber of Commerce since 1920 would be like repeating the history of the city. Composed of the city's most progressive citizens, and playing no part in politics, it has aided in countless ways to make Sarasota a finer place in which to live. It has advocated and obtained innumerable public improvements, it has advertised the city throughout the nation, it has helped to organize clubs and societies for winter visitors, and it has supported every worthwhile project designed to advance the city's interests. In short, the Chamber of Commerce has been the driving force which has kept Sarasota forging ahead, in good times and bad.

The work of the Chamber has been effective simply because of the high-calibre of its members. For that reason, there should be recorded the names of the directors who have served at several important periods.

In the winter of 1925-26, during the height of the Florida boom, the directors were: Charles Ringling, R. K. Thompson, E. A. Smith, Jo Gill, W. H. Stephens, A. B. Edwards, George L. Thacker, J. H. Lord, Louis Lancaster, M. L. Townsend, T. L. Livermore, Fred F. Wooley, A. E. Cummer, L. L. Richardson, A. L. Joiner, Frank A. Walpole, I. G. Archibald, Asa Cassidy, Walter H. Green, L. D. Reagin, Ralph C. Caples, C. E. Hitchings, J. C. Peels, John Ringling, George B. Prime, S. R. Perry, Stephen Albee, Charles G. Strohmeier, S. W. Longmire, Herbert Sawyer, Owen Burns, M. L. Wread, E. J. Bacon, J. E. Battle, E. O. Burns, Rev. A. E. Barnett, George D. Lindsay, J. Harris Jones, J. A. Oliver, John J. McGraw, Forest Adair, Jr., Samuel Gumpertz, J. H. Lord, Jr., George H. Day, and Judge John H. Carter.

In 1933, during the depths of the depression, the directors were: Dr. Walter Kennedy, C. E. Hitchings, Dr. Will Northern, Prince Michael Cantacuzene, Charles Lewis, Roger V. Flory, W. L. VanDame, Ray Jackson, E. A. Smith, Paul Cobb, Samuel W. Gumpertz, George D. Lindsay, Walter Jungmeyer, Ben Handler, Ed Shoor, Ralph C. Caples, Paul Bergman, Ray Richardson, and J. W. Davis.

In 1946, the directors were: Frank G. Berlin, J. O. Alderman, Brown Austin, Al Bayless, Karl A. Bickel, Ed Cartledge, M. E. (Jack) Cox, Len Crees, T. R. Cul-

ler, C. K. S. Dodd, Ben J. Drymon, A. E. Esthus, Roy Fenne, T. L. Glenn, Jr., J. D. Harmon, Phil Huguenin, B. F. Markham, Johns McCulley, Benton Powell, Wilfrid Robarts, Ernest Sears, Guy Shepard, Ed Shoor, E. A. Smith, and Mrs. Elise Stokes.

Presidents of the Chamber have been: Hamden S. Smith, 1920-21; A. B. Edwards, 1922-24; Charles Ringling, 1925-27; John Ringling, 1927-30; E. A. Smith, 1931-32; Ray Jackson, part of 1932; W. L. VanDame, 1933; Dr. Walter C. Kennedy, 1933-35; Frank A. Logan, 1935-36; George L. Thacker, 1936-37; Roger V. Flory, 1937-38; Joseph V. Lawrence, 1938-40; Phil Huguenin, 1940-41; Kenneth Koach, 1941-43; A. B. Shogren, 1943-44, and Frank Berlin, 1944 to present (1946). While the Ringlings were president, E. A. Smith served as executive vice-president.

Secretaries of the Chamber have been: Walter M. Ford, appointed November 12, 1920; E. S. Delbridge, from March 31, 1921, to January 15, 1922; L. S. Moody, January 15, 1922 to 1924; Willis B. Powell, from early 1924 to March 2, 1926; W. B. Estes, March 2, 1926, to August 23, 1927; James Coad, to November 1, 1928; W. T. Simpson, November 1, 1928, to November 15, 1937; Marian Hobson, to December 7, 1942; Dudley Haddock, to Feb. 1, 1945; Earl C. Stead, executive secretary from August 1, 1945, to present (1946).

### WOMAN'S CLUB

Organized in 1913, and incorporated in 1914, the Sarasota Woman's Club has behind it years of community service—in literary, social, civic, educational, scientific and philanthropic fields.

Taking its part in local and state affairs, the Woman's Club seeks "the advancement of womankind in all directions." Member's pledge: "Holding worthy of unfailing loyalty my membership in the Woman's Club of Sarasota, I will sustain its good works and guard its reputation."

Through the club branches, the Thursday Musicales and the Junior Woman's Club, the musical and younger groups in the city are drawn into club activities. Regular program meetings, bridge parties and scheduled "events" are held at the clubhouse.

The club was organized at a meeting held Monday, April 14, 1913. Officers elected were: Mrs. F. H. Guenther, president; Mrs. Joseph Halton, vice-president; Mrs. E. A. Kartack, treasurer; Mrs. J. B. Chapline, Jr., secretary, and Mrs. Harriet Cavan, corresponding secretary. Mrs. C. V. S. Wilson served as temporary secretary before the formal election of officers.

Charter members were: Mrs. Alice Guenther, Bessie Burns, Lillian S. Thompson, Mary Colt Halton, Mary M. Colt, Helen M. Noble, Blossom C. Vaughan, Josephine Y. Pearce, Mrs. Ella T. Knighton, Rose L. Cocks, Emma P. Ewing, Elizabeth H. Burket, Angie S. Keener, Mrs. J. H. Faubel, Elizabeth F. Adam, Sallie S. Abbitt, Margaret C. Davis, Alice B. Titus, Mrs. C. W. Matheny, Nina B. Pitcher, Mrs. G. M. McAlpin, Jr., Mrs. Olin Teate, Edna F. Halton, Mrs. Jessie D. Cros-

by, Edith Elliott Kartack, Neal Wyatt Chapline, Kathryn Southgate, Escher Edmonson, Mrs. Annie B. Yates, Annie Bretz Bruce, Alice C. Hughes, E. S. Frasier, Viola B. Jones, Mrs. O. P. Collins, Etta Grate, Montie G. Fish, Carrie LuZier, Dorothy Dent, Mrs. C. V. S. Wilson, Mrs. K. M. Hebb, Mrs. G. W. Franklin, Mrs. Lee D. Hatch, Miss Beryl Knighton, Mrs. M. Louise Hazen, Mrs. Phillip D. Lacey, Mary L. Southgate, Mrs. E. R. List, Doane M. Tuttle, Gertrude G. Higel, Alice Bright, Bessie Arnold, Rose Griffith Bryan, Harriet Ora Caven, Harriett E. Hart, Jane Liddell, Mrs. O. A. Burton, Elise Elliott, Mrs. T. W. Yarbrough, Mrs. Owen Burns, Mrs. James G. Campbell and Mrs. F. William Schultz.

Immediately after organization, the club began taking an ever increasing role in civic affairs. One of its notable projects during the first year was the improvement of Rosemary Cemetery where a road was graded, curbed and shelled and the grounds beautified with shrubs. Funds for the work were obtained by various methods, ranging from cake sales and publication of cook books to the sponsorship of baseball games.

The club also took over the operation of the library originally started in December, 1907, by the Sarasota Library Association, an outgrowth of the Town Improvement Society. When the library was turned over to the club it had approximately 600 volumes, book racks, and a building fund of \$65. The library was maintained by the Woman's Club in the Gillespie Block (now known as the Badger Pharmacy building), until the spring of 1915 when it was moved to the new home of the club at Palm Avenue and Park Street.

The ground breaking ceremonies for this new club house was held January 1, 1915. John F. Burkett acted as master of ceremonies. The invocation was delivered by Dr. George L. Thompson. Speakers were Mayor A. B. Edwards, I. R. Burns, R. C. Caples, H. N. Hall, J. Elwood Moore, Dr. J. Barney Low and Mrs. Guenther.

The club house was formally opened Wednesday, April 14, 1915, with public receptions in the afternoon and evening.

Mrs. Guenther served as president for eight consecutive years. After she declined to be re-elected, the club members showed appreciation for her long years of work by naming one of the club rooms in her honor. Succeeding presidents of the club have been: Mrs. Joseph Halton, Mrs. F. W. Schultz, Mrs. Caroline M. Stehn, Mrs. Frank Metzger, Mrs. C. H. Dean, Mrs. Don Newburn, Mrs. W. F. Phillips, Mrs. James O. Gardner, Mrs. Harry Gocio, Mrs. Frank Binz, Mrs. Bob Newhall, Mrs. L. M. Correll and Mrs. Bob Newhall.

### THE AMERICAN LEGION

Sarasota Bay Post Number 30 of the American Legion, formed in February, 1919, has played an active, generous part in the growth of Sarasota, and in the well-being of not only Legionnaires but all local citizens.

Conceived by a little group of veterans, among whom Dr. F. W. Schultz, A. L. Joiner, J. M. Chris-

tie, Homer Hebb, Lewis Combs and Homer Howard were prominent, the post has accomplished outstanding work. To it goes credit for many civic activities, such as creation and maintenance since the early twenties of the Legion Tonsil and Adenoid Clinic in which more than 600 children have been operated on regardless of Legion affiliation, and establishment of "Point Welcome" managed and supported by Legion and Auxiliary members from its opening on December 7, 1933, through that winter, after which the city offered financial aid.

"Point Welcome" occupied the triangle at the county and city limits formed by the Tamiana Trail and Bayshore Drive. Here Legionnaires hailed cars entering Sarasota County, invited tourists to stop and rest in a pretty, palmetto-constructed building, served orange juice without charge, answered questions, and distributed literature explaining local points of interest. During its six-year life it was literally a "Point Welcome," and was responsible for many visitors becoming permanent residents of Sarasota.

Also the post participated in the dedication of that section of Main Street between Orange Avenue and the present Atlantic Coast Line station as "Victory Avenue." Earlier, the Woman's Club of Sarasota had planted 181 trees, one for each veteran of World War I, along this portion of the thoroughfare.

Following a storm which destroyed a previous flagpole at Five Points, the post erected another dedicated to Sarasota's war dead. The first outstanding ceremony at the flagpole in which the Legion took part was held on Armistice Day, November 11, 1919. W. Y. Perry was the principal speaker.

Sarasota Bay Post Number 30 has been noted not only for generously supporting civic efforts in general, but for instituting many original campaigns for the betterment of the city and county.

One such plan came from Legionnaire M. C. Poss in 1928, and was promptly adopted by the post. It provided for the presentation of a merit of award each year to the person who, in the Legion's opinion, had most greatly helped the community at large during the preceding 12 months. First of these awards went to Arthur Clarke. Among others to receive them were Dr. Jack Halton, Captain William H. Young, Rev. William A. Lillycrop, Ralph C. Caples, Arthur B. Edwards, Mrs. W. Y. Perry, Karl A. Bickel, Mrs. Sally Pelot, Mrs. William Donaldson, Kenneth Koach and A. E. Esthus.

During World War II the post provided sleeping accommodations at the Coliseum for between 50 and 60 service men a night. It also furnished Christmas Eve dinner and entertainment for approximately 1,000 service men and women in 1944, repeating the plan for about 800 in 1945. Then, too, in 1944 the post sent more than 500 Christmas gifts to hospitalized personnel, each gift worth about \$10. This also was repeated in 1945, gifts numbering some 150 and worth \$15 each.

For many years the post has provided Christmas baskets for Sarasota's needy, regardless of Legion affiliation. Add to this a policy of community help and

you'll have a fair picture of the organization and its aims.

The post's history shows remarkable growth despite several serious setbacks. The setbacks occurred primarily during the so-called "boom days," but they failed to faze Legion activities. Now Sarasota Bay Post Number 30 has an adequate home in the Coliseum and has a comfortable financial backlog.

The first local meetings of veterans were held in the old Masonic Temple over the Blackburn Building, also in the Belle Haven Inn, and the Badger Pharmacy.

After the charter was secured in February, 1919, a meeting was held in Ed Maus' theatre to organize the post under state regulations, which included election of officers and appointment of a board of directors. "Past Commanders" Dr. Jack Halton, Paul C. Albritton, and Dr. Schultz were named to comply with the new regulations. A. L. Joiner became the first commander under the state charter. The first board of directors consisted of Paul C. Albritton, Arthur Clarke, Lewis Combs, Dr. Jack Halton, A. L. Joiner and Homer Howard.

Charter and pre-charter members included the directors and Jimmie Harn, Lonnie Harn, Claude Ragin, Bert Wolfskiel, Byron Olsen, Decatur Pelot, Lyman Biorseth, Irvin Biorseth, John Lacey, Cyrus Byrd, R. M. Cantey, J. M. Christie, Calvin Hodges, Oliver Blackburn, Jake Miller and Homer Hebb.

The first real Legion home was a building on the municipal pier, but the building and pier were destroyed by the hurricane of October, 1921, and along with them went the early records including the state charter. This, however, did not discourage the post which after continuing meetings wherever possible, finally took over the city council chamber at the foot of Main Street. Here the Legion made its headquarters until it moved to the new Mira Mar auditorium in 1924.

While there, the post knowing it must build or buy a permanent home, staged a series of entertainments as part of a campaign for a building fund. This included a big picnic which started the ball rolling. Charles Jones, an automobile dealer, donated a new car to be raffled to raise money. Strangely, it was won by Miss Alice Howard whose father disapproved of raffles and who persuaded her to give back the car. That meant the car was really sold twice—the second time for a lump cash sum.

Soon afterward the building committee got busy, secured plans for a \$50,000 home and bought a vacant lot opposite the Mira Mar auditorium. But an offer of \$110,000 was made for the lot and the Legion sold the property, receiving \$20,000 cash. There were more real estate deals, more changes of opinion, until the post finally bought a lot on Golf Street at Washington Boulevard upon which it erected a small building that was used for six years. However, a popular boxing match schedule which drew big crowds finally convinced the building committee and Legion members that the clubhouse was too small. Arrangements were made to test out the present Coliseum, built but never occupied by an automobile agency and garage. The building was found to be so well suited to the

post's needs that it was purchased and remodeled, and since then has time and again proven its value to the Sarasota region.

Past commanders include those already mentioned and Dr. Jack Halton, Lewis Combs, Arthur Clarke, Arthur Cundy, Harrison E. Barringer, Frank Martin, M. C. Poss, John Fite Robertson, Milton Thomas, Russell Spence, C. L. McKaig, James Haley, Frank A. Logan, Douglas Arnest, Charles Kelly, Paul C. Albritton, Frank Cragin, Arthur Esthus, Ray Richardson, Frank Hart, Roger V. Flory, William A. Wynne, Lewis Van Wezel, Charles Dempsey, Bryan Pemberton and W. J. Boylston.

Officers of the post for 1946-47 were: Wilfrid Roberts, commander; Roland Davis, first vice-commander; Ben Hopkins, second vice-commander; Harold French, third vice-commander; Russ Chiles, finance officer; Andy Anderson, chaplain; Henry Wainwright, historian; Stuart Beerye, sergeant-at-arms; Douglas Arnest, adjutant; Jud Boylston, Dr. Richard Halton, Roy Lutz, Lewis Van Wezel, and Dr. Will L. Northern, directors; Douglas Arnest, Van Wezel and Dr. Halton, trustees.

### KIWANIS CLUB

The Kiwanis Club of Sarasota was organized November 8, 1922, with 68 charter members: Paul C. Albritton, I. G. Archibald, E. J. Bacon, J. E. Battle, A. J. Beck, E. H. Burch, John F. Burket, Ralph C. Caples, R. M. Coffin, J. W. Crawford, R. B. Curry, Franklin P. Dean, A. B. Edwards, O. S. Ellis, Frank H. Gallup, James O. Gardner, Jo Gill, J. Hamilton Gillespie, Harry C. Green, Jack Halton, Joseph Halton, F. J. Hayden, J. D. Hazen, C. E. Hitchings, W. J. Johnston, A. L. Joiner, J. Velma Keen, Charles E. LeRoy, Phil Levy, T. L. Livermore, Stanley W. Longmire, J. H. Lord, Thomas R. Martin, Frank C. Martin, L. S. Moody, Will McFarland, George J. Nichols, S. E. Olson, W. L. Pearsall, W. Y. Perry, John W. Philip, William Fred Prentice, George B. Prime, John R. Proctor, N. T. Ragland, Harry Rigby, Michael Roth, Herbert S. Sawyer, Harry Sawyer, J. F. Shumate, E. A. Smith, H. S. Smith, E. Watt Smith, D. R. K. Steel, C. P. Teate, George L. Thacker, R. C. Thompson, Russell K. Thompson, Paul Thompson, F. N. Tyler, J. H. Walker, Frank A. Walpole, F. H. West, C. B. Wilson, Elmer Whittle, W. K. Wolf, M. L. Wread, and T. W. Yarbrough.

The first officers were: A. L. Joiner, president; R. K. Thompson, vice-president; Herbert S. Sawyer, secretary, and C. E. Hitchings, treasurer. The directors were E. A. Smith, F. N. Tyler, M. B. Roth, Elmer Whittle, J. Hamilton Gillespie, Phil H. Levy, and Dr. Joseph Halton.

Presidents of the club have been: A. L. Joiner, E. A. Smith, Homer T. Welch, Michael Cantacuzene, Dr. Will Northern, Herbert S. Sawyer, Dr. John R. Scully, Dr. Joseph Halton, Dr. A. O. Morton, Hooper W. Russell, Dr. W. J. Johnston, Paul C. Albritton, Ray E. Jackson, Verman Kimbrough, J. J. Williams, Jr., Charles C. Montague, Jr., Dr. S. Paul Sanders, A. B. Shogren, Frank Evans, C. E. McEachern, Carl C.

Strode, Harry Coggeshall, Melton S. Keels, Ben J. Drymon and C. Rowland Shannon.

Since its organization, the club has taken a keen interest in providing for under-privileged children and also has been commended by Kiwanis International for successful children's recreational programs. In 1946, the major project of the club was the establishment of a home for the indigent aged of Sarasota County and a temporary home for dependent children to be known as the Kiwanis Welfare Home. The club owns the site for a home on Orange Avenue and construction was planned as soon as building materials became available.

Club members in 1946 were: J. M. Alston, M. V. Altman, J. Douglas Arnest, W. A. Barker, C. R. Bickford, Edward A. Boalt, Frank C. Boon, B. L. Bowman, Col. A. J. Brandon, Jules Brazil, J. B. Browning, Rudy Bundy, W. E. Burnell, Dr. J. M. Butcher, Arch Butler, J. C. Cardwell, J. F. Chapman, John T. Chidsey, B. H. Coggeshall, J. L. Coleman, F. J. Conrad, A. D. Corson, Allen E. Crowley, Russell A. Currin, Charles Dempsey, C. K. S. Dodd, L. A. Dodson, C. H. Downs, Ben J. Drymon, A. L. Ellis, Frank Evans, Dr. Joe B. Fugua, E. A. Garner, E. E. Gridley, Ben Haber, Ben Handler, J. D. Harmon, Dr. J. E. Harris, C. L. Herring, Hugh R. Hick, K. O. Hipp, P. B. Huguenin, W. L. Hoots, A. R. Howard, B. H. Hopkins, Boyd L. Hudgins, C. A. Ihrig, F. X. Jannell, M. S. Keels, K. H. Koach, L. M. Levinson, H. O. Leuschner, Abraham Levy, R. C. Licata, B. F. Markham, J. H. McArthur, L. W. McLain, C. E. McEachern, Charles Mills, S. C. Montgomery, Dr. A. O. Morton, C. J. Muir, Gordon H. Norman, Dr. J. C. Patterson, H. J. Pelletier, J. O. Porter, J. M. Rhoades, Dr. S. P. Sanders, W. E. Scoggin, C. R. Shannon, C. D. Shaw, A. B. Shogren, E. D. Shoor, Ernest C. Smith, C. C. Strode, George L. Thacker, Capt. M. C. Thomas, Ralph F. Voight, J. C. Walker, W. B. Weigel, Lieut. Com. S. L. White, and J. J. Williams, Jr.

Officers in 1946 were: C. Rowland Shannon, president; Phil B. Huguenin, first vice-president; C. K. S. Dodd, second vice-president; Edward D. Shoor, treasurer, and A. B. Shogren, secretary. Directors: Dr. John M. Butcher, Chet A. Ihrig, L. W. McLain, A. R. Howard, Charles L. Herring, John B. Browning, Ernest C. Smith, and B. F. Markham.

A. B. Edwards is an honorary member of the club.

### DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

The Sara de Soto Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution was organized March 25, 1925, at the home of the organizing regent, Mrs. James O. Gardner. The national number is 1669, granted April 16, 1926, and the state chapter number is 12.

Twelve organizing members were: Inez Winifred Antwis, Mary Agnes Coe Burch, Zada C. L. Gardner, Marion Euphemia Green, Christine Batcheller Gozio, Elise Wallace Hebb, Sibbel H. D. Livermore, Pauline Bacheller McLeod, Mary Ida Bromley, Ethel Belle West, Sallie Yeager Calhoun Teate, and Jane Low Thompson.

Past regents of the chapter have been: Mrs. James O. Gardner, Mrs. T. L. Livermore, Mrs. Paul Thompson, Mrs. E. J. Bacon, Mrs. K. M. Hebb, Mrs. Arthur E. Gocio, Miss Alpha Nash, Mrs. Otis Landers, Mrs. A. J. Brandon, Mrs. Herman Robinson, Mrs. C. S. Carlisle, and Mrs. George E. Green.

Members in 1945-46 were: Norma Stratton Bacon, Gertrude Bates, Mary Eva McCall Birchfield, Berenice Thayer Brandon, Antoniette Whiting Brigham, Mary Phillips Brownell, Mary Agnes Coe Burch, Edith Peckham Cadwell, Julia Grant Cantacuzene, Mabel L. Carlisle, Augusta Adell Chase, Olive K. Chase, Alice V. Smith Clark, Ella McFarland Coons, Alice M. P. Corrigan, Maebelle Early, Mary E. Cooper Freemyer, Zada C. L. Gardner, Christine Batchelder Gocio, Bertha O. Green, Alice M. Guenther, Mary Helen Gunster, Mary Colt Halton, Madge Hall Hatley, Eulalia McNeely Jones, Isabella Reeder Jones, Grace A. M. Kendall, Katherine Koach, Lillian Robinson Libert, Bertha Purdy Longmire, Miss Roslyn Lumpkin, Virginia Yates Matheny, Miss Elizabeth Matheny, Alice F. McKaig, Miss Alpha Barnes Nash, Miss Caroline L. Nash, Mary Eleanor Patterson, Edith Seckell Palmer, Katharine Whyte Perry, Miss Eva Pope, Mrs. Shawna J. Quinn, Elizabeth Rauscher, Mrs. Marjorie Green Reynolds, Nina Brown Sanders, Louie Sophronia Simons, Abbie Stevens, Louise White Stockbridge, Sallie Calhoun Teate, Mary E. Houghton Telford, Miss Polly Stebbins Telford, Florence Vanderkloot, Louise Dodge Whitaker, Hildred W. Williams, and Annie G. Woodruff.

The highway marker at Broadway and 18th Street calling attention to the homesite and tomb of Mary Wyatt Whitaker was erected by the chapter Wednesday, December 2, 1936. At the unveiling of the marker was Nancy Whitaker Helveston, then 84 years old, oldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Whitaker. Harriet Sturgis, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Voltaire Sturgis and great, great grand daughter of the Whitakers, unveiled the plaque. It was presented to the city by Miss Alpha B. Nash, chapter regent, and accepted by Mayor E. A. Smith.

### SARASOTA BAY COUNTRY CLUB

Early in May, 1927, H. L. Barnes and Associates, owners of Whitfield Estates, offered Sarasota and Bradenton people the Whitfield Estates club house and golf course providing they would take care of the operating expenses of the club. The offer was accepted May 16 and the membership was limited to 100, in addition to lot owners at Whitfield.

Nine directors were elected to look after the affairs of the club. They were: Charles E. Corrigan, George D. Lindsay, Louis Lancaster, T. E. Burts, Screven Bond, W. L. Van Dame, Clare C. Hosmer, Paul Souders and Roswell King. Successive presidents were Corrigan, Lindsay, John F. Burkett and George W. Earle.

In 1937, a syndicate was formed to purchase the club property and since then it has been owned by the club members. Its name was changed to the Sarasota Bay Country Club. The presidents of this club

have been: Dr. E. W. Pinkham, George D. Lindsay, Alfred Saxe, John S. Somerville and Col. A. J. Brandon.

The club house and golf course, valued now at more than \$500,000, were constructed in 1925 by the Adair Realty Co. of Atlanta, in connection with the Whitfield Estates development. The 18-hole course, built by Donald Ross, was officially opened January 22, 1926, when Bobby Jones and Tommy Armour defeated Long Jim Barnes and Johnny Farrell, 4 up and 3 to go.

### ROTARY CLUB

The Rotary Club of Sarasota was organized February 17, 1926, at a meeting held at the Rendezvous Restaurant on Main Street. Approximately 75 men attended. In addition to the 24 charter members, there were representatives of other Sarasota civic clubs and many visiting Rotarians.

Preliminary work to get the club established was done during the year preceding by Rotarians from other cities who had come to Sarasota to live: Ben Kagay, of Kankakee, Ill.; James C. Hughey, of Columbia, Tenn., and Harrison E. Barringer, of Jacksonville.

The charter from Rotary International was formally presented to the local club April 26, 1926, by Robert R. Walden, president of the St. Petersburg Rotary Club, who had been designated by District Governor John B. Orr, of Miami, to act as his representative.

First officers of the club were: Ben F. Kagay, president; Harrison E. Barringer, vice-president; J. C. Hughey, secretary, and Silas S. Juliar treasurer. The board of directors consisted of the officers and Ed Morgan, Dr. Walter C. Kennedy and L. H. Thompson.

Since its organization, the Rotary Club has been active in all civic affairs. It organized and sponsored the present Sarasota High School band; in 1941, it built and dedicated the Scout Hut for Boy Scout Troop Six, which the members sponsor. Each fall, the club holds the annual hospital ball to help raise money for the Sarasota Hospital.

Presidents of the club have been: Ben F. Kagay, Harrison E. Barringer, John Woolard, V. D. Sturgis, Claude Turner, Louis E. Hall, Dr. Walter C. Kennedy, Rev. Charles L. Elslander, Harrison E. Barringer, Chris Constantine, John W. Davis, Rev. William Lillycrop, Walter Munroe, W. E. Evans, T. R. Culler, Lee Hazen, A. W. Knapp, Jerry Van Orden, H. S. Taylor, T. R. Culler, Rev. George Foster, and M. E. Cox.

In 1946-47 the officers of the club were: Ernest Sears, president; George Hall, secretary-treasurer; M. E. Cox, vice president; and Edward H. Baker, T. R. Culler, James R. Griffin, H. S. Taylor, and J. M. Harmon, members of the board of directors.

In addition to the above, the members of the club in 1946 were: Wade Adams, Powell Aldrich, R. O. Bailey, E. L. Cartledge, C. W. Colliver, C. Constantine, R. B. Davies, Oscar L. Delano, W. E. Evans, L. F. Fenne, S. P. Floyd, Harry Gocio, Taylor Green, James R. Griffin, G. W. Groff, W. R. Grove, M. W. Hammond, Mac Harmon, E. F. Hoerger, F. J. Hoersting, W. C. Kennedy, A. W. Knapp, W. S. Leak, E. H. Lyon,

J. H. McCulley, C. L. McKaig, Louis Mocabee, W. F. Molder, W. N. Munroe, H. J. Newburn, Bob Newhall, J. B. O'Neil, Martin O'Neil, Harry Price, M. E. Russell, Taylor Scott, Karl Shrode, Earle Stead, J. H. Stedman, C. J. Stokes, H. S. Taylor, Edgar Thompkins, Leo Wilson, H. Wolstenholme, and James Younkman.

### UNITED DAUGHTERS OF THE CONFEDERACY

The Col. John A. Fite Chapter, No. 1924, of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, was organized March 31, 1927, by Mrs. O. Brownell, who served as president until 1930.

The chapter was named in honor of Col. John A. Fite who organized a company of men at Carthage, Tenn., at the outbreak of the War between the States and fought with the utmost bravery. He was twice wounded and was confined as a prisoner of war for two years at Sandusky, O., where he almost died of starvation.

Presidents of the chapter have been: Mrs. O. Brownell, Mrs. Stewart Long, Mrs. R. B. Davies, Mrs. Sidney R. Perry, Mrs. N. G. Robertson, Mrs. J. H. Blackshear, Mrs. O. T. Hale, Mrs. James Silvertooth, Mrs. L. D. Reagin, and Mrs. L. R. Brace.

The local chapter placed the Judah P. Benjamin Marker which designates one of the few historical spots in Sarasota County. It has also donated a shelf of books of southern literature to the local library and has a scholarship loan plan.

In 1946, members of the chapter are: Mrs. F. M. Appleby, Mrs. O. Brownell, Mrs. J. H. Blackshear, Mrs. L. R. Brace, Mrs. F. A. Campbell, Mrs. John L. Early, Mrs. T. L. Glenn, Mrs. F. S. Hammett, Mrs. O. T. Hale, Mrs. M. H. Jones, Mrs. T. L. Ketchersid, Mrs. H. B. Kennedy, Mrs. L. D. Le Gette, Mrs. C. J. Muir, Mrs. L. D. Reagin, Mrs. Carrie S. Reid, Mrs. John M. Richardson, Mrs. John Fite Robertson, Mrs. James T. Silvertooth, Mrs. R. P. Sponenbarger, Mrs. Frances Teate, Mrs. C. R. Woods, and Mrs. J. J. Williams. Associate members are Mrs. C. H. Leps, Mrs. G. E. Pratt and Mrs. Ida Shelby.

### SALVATION ARMY

For nearly two decades, leading citizens of Sarasota have given whole-hearted support to the Salvation Army, simply because they have been convinced that the organization has performed meritorious work in giving aid and comfort to the needy people of the entire county, regardless of race or creed. The Army has not only preached Christianity—it has practiced Christianity, and when it asks for financial support its pleas are heeded.

The Army first established a post here in April, 1927, in a small dismal room at 362 Main Street with Ensign and Mrs. John Horgan in command. In the years which followed the post was moved from place to place until the present Citadel on South Pineapple Street was completed on January 19, 1941. The lot to the north of the Citadel has been purchased and

will be used as a playground. In 1942 Mrs. Charles Ringling gave two lots on Tenth Street, near Central as a site for transient lodge. The officers' quarters at 527 Ohio street were bought in 1935.

The Salvation Army has dealt with every kind of relief cases: providing food to needy families, giving medical aid to hundreds of sick and suffering, providing fuel and clothing to those in want, caring for the unmarried mother and giving advice and spiritual guidance to the dispirited so they might again become strong and self supporting.

Most of the finest work of the post was done while Adjutant and Mrs. James Halliday were in charge from September, 1935, to June, 1945, when they were transferred to Daytona. The officers now in charge are Capt. and Mrs. Louis Mockabee.

Members of the first advisory board were: Frank Redd, Phil H. Levy, C. E. Hitchings, A. L. Joiner, E. L. Beeson, J. E. Battle, George B. Prime, J. A. Clark, Lawrence May, R. I. Kennedy, H. Munson, W. E. Stephens, V. A. Saunders, W. S. Harris, W. L. Dunn, and E. M. Pake.

The 1945-46 advisory board members were: Charles Pickett, W. G. Shepard, J. B. Green, R. C. Caples, Mrs. Charles Ringling, E. A. Smith, P. M. Birmingham, C. L. McKaig, Walter Munroe, Paul C. Albritton, J. Douglas Arnest, Floyd Ziegler, J. J. Williams, Jr., Glover Ashby and B. W. Powell.

### SARASOTA GARDEN CLUB

Almost twenty years of civic enterprise and high achievement is the proud record of the Federated Circles of the Sarasota Garden Club. The first garden club, which has since become the Founders Circle, was organized May 6, 1927, at the home of Mrs. A. E. Cummer. Mrs. John Ringling was elected president. The first regular meeting was held November 22, 1927, at the home of Mrs. Ringling.

In 1928, the Bignonia Circle was organized by Mrs. E. A. Smith and Mrs. Henry Winslow became the first president. The Tree Circle also was organized in 1928, by Mrs. Henry Williford. These three Circles carried on the work of the club for five years and then, in 1933 the Indian Beach Circle, with Mrs. W. H. Donaldson as first president, and the Granada Circle, with Mrs. John Williamson as president, were organized. The Palm Circle was organized in 1937 with Mrs. Warren J. Brodie as its first president. The Hibiscus Circle was organized in 1938.

In 1933 the circles were federated and became the Federated Circles of the Garden Club of Sarasota.

Presidents of the Garden Club Founders Circle were Mrs. John Ringling, Mrs. Fred Wooley, Mrs. A. E. Cummer, Mrs. Fred Albee and Mrs. Ralph Caples. Presidents of the Federated Circles have been: Mrs. John Williamson, Mrs. C. A. Martin, Mrs. Lillian Ayer, Mrs. A. Edson Hall, Mrs. L. Roy Brace, Mrs. Lionel Drew and Mrs. Karl Bickel.

One of the most ambitious undertakings of the federation has been the development of Luke Wood Park since April, 1934. Different parts of the park have been developed by the various circles and the

Mabel Ringling Memorial Fountain, the ravine, pool, and bird sanctuary all stand for cooperative efforts in the park beautification. Over one thousand plants and trees have been planted.

Other projects of the federation have been The Players' grounds, the pool and garden at the civic center, the avenue of palms in front of the auditorium, the avenue of jacarandas and white bauhinias at the civic center, plantings on Palm and Gulf Stream avenues, the high school grounds, and picnic benches along the Ringling causeway. Over \$11,000 have been spent on civic beautification.

The club has held ten flower shows, carried on war work, has worked for the elimination of signs along highways, has urged the beautification of filling stations and worked for fire control and bird and wild flower protection. An active center at the end of the pier before the war did much to interest Sarasotans in horticulture. The club's most recent venture was a radio program presented every Sunday afternoon, beginning in January 1946. Information about gardening problems was given during the talks. The main object of all the club members is the same today as when the club was first organized: to create a more beautiful Sarasota, a more beautiful Florida.

### COUNCIL OF P.-T. A. ASSOCIATIONS

The Sarasota County Council of Parent-Teacher Associations was organized in 1929 to facilitate co-operation of the various local P.T.A.'s in their work for the welfare of children. The first officers of the council were: Mrs. Frank Logan, president, Miss Doris Brownell, first vice-president; Mrs. R. Y. Woodhull, second vice-president; Mrs. Mason Rose, secretary, Mrs. A. O. Skaggs, treasurer, Mrs. Charles Bryant, publicity; Mrs. A. O. Morton, membership; Mrs. W. McElwen, welfare; Mrs. Stephen Albee, finance; Mrs. Frank McFadyen, program; Mrs. Ed Hogan, hospitality; Mrs. Adele Benjamin, music, and Mrs. Clare Hover, extension.

Since its organization, the following women have served as president: Mrs. Logan, Mrs. W. H. Stephens, Mrs. I. G. Archibald, Mrs. Howard Dial, Mrs. John H. Foster, Mrs. George Betz, Mrs. George Welsted, Mrs. George Oxnam, Mrs. J. O. Hendry, Mrs. Paul D. Boggs and Mrs. W. Gwynn Fox.

Local P.T.A. presidents for 1945-46 were: Bay Haven—Mrs. A. F. McFadyen; Bee Ridge—Mrs. A. L. Moore; Central School—Mrs. G. E. John; Fruitville—Mrs. Robert Johns; Sarasota High School—Charles L. Herring; Southside—Mrs. M. E. Cox; Englewood—Mrs. Josie Croxon, and Venice-Nokomis—Mrs. A. L. Blalock.

The first projects of county council undertaken in 1929 were to obtain good heating systems for the schools of the county and to employ a county school nurse. These aims were realized. During the depression years, a milk fund was raised and a soup kitchen maintained for needy children. For many years the council sponsored a George Washington celebration for the children each February. The council also aided in the establishment of the Sarasota Youth Center.

In 1946 the P.T.A. membership in the county totalled 1,017.

### THE PLAYERS

The Players, an amateur theatrical group, is one of Sarasota's most popular social organizations. It is nationally recognized as a leader in the field of Little Theatre.

The organization was born in 1929 in an abandoned caddy house of the Siesta Key Golf Club. It was incorporated in December, 1931, by Fred A. Canizares, Loring Raoul, J. W. Crawford, Ralph C. Caples and Paul M. Souder. Mrs. Charles Hull Ewing was elected first president. For several years the members met in an empty Main Street store room in the Crisp building. The first play was presented early in 1931 and ran for one night only. Since then the players have presented 114 regular stage productions in addition to a large number of play readings and other special events. Its membership has increased from an original 30 to nearly 1100.

Except for a salaried professional director and several technical and clerical assistants, everything connected with a Players' production is done by the members themselves. They form the cast, work on scenery and stage sets, operate the lights, design costumes, and serve as make-up experts, stage managers, ticket takers and ushers.

The Players' theatre on Broadway was formally opened Sunday afternoon December 13, 1936. Hostesses at the open house were: Mrs. W. H. Donaldson, Mrs. W. F. Purdy, Mrs. Ralph C. Caples, Miss Fanneal Harrison, Miss Eva Pope, Mrs. John F. Burket, Mrs. Loring Raoul, Mrs. Clayton McMichael, Mrs. Ralph Twitchell, Mrs. Basil Williamson, Mrs. Lillian Thompson, Mrs. Frederic de Canizares, Mrs. Jarvis Livermore Hardisty, Mrs. Lowell Morey, Mrs. Clarence Stokes, Mrs. Richard Halton, Mrs. Fred Stevenson, Mrs. Alexander Bloch, Mrs. Frank Evans, Mrs. Leonard Weil, Mrs. Homer K. Galpin, Mrs. Frederick Kerry, Mrs. Pearson Conrad, Mrs. E. W. Pinkham, Mrs. E. A. Smith, Mrs. Owen Burns, Mrs. Clyde S. Ford, Mrs. Walter G. Frauenheim, Mrs. S. James Joyce and Mrs. Truman Fassett.

The Players' first production in the new theatre was the Gilbert and Sullivan opera, "The Sorcerer," which was presented late in December, 1936. Since then the Players have played to audiences totalling more than 10,000 persons.

### LONGBOAT CABANA CLUB

Longboat Cabana Club was organized in 1936. A club house and cabanas on Longboat Key were built that fall and opened December 16, 1936, with Karl A. Bickel as the first president. After the first year, the president of the club has been Samuel W. Gumpertz.

### LIONS CLUB

The Sarasota Lions Club was organized and chartered by Lions International on January 6, 1939, with the following charter members: Dr. Stanley T. Martin, John Neel, A. L. Sanders, Frank McLain, Jack

Rhoads, William Terrell, Donald Dubois, Bert Ammons, Preston Knapp, A. R. Anderson, William Hoffman, Frank Archibald, Russell Maxwell, Clyde Wilson, Werner Kannenberg, and W. A. Wynne. The club was sponsored by the Arcadia Lions Club through Wilford Roberts. Representatives of other Sarasota clubs and state officials attended Charter Night, held in Palm Cafeteria.

Presidents of the club have been: Dr. Stanley T. Martin, Preston Knapp, Wilfred Roberts, Frank McLain, Edward Parkins, Roy Lopshire, Edward E. Donaldson and Stanley Gray.

Since its organization, the club has actively supported all worthwhile projects designed to aid in the upbuilding of Sarasota. Its main activities have centered on sight conservation and work for the blind.

Members of the club in 1946: George H. Altman, Walter S. Anderson, Bert Ammons, Glover E. Ashby, L. W. Ballard, Harry Banks, Joe Barth, Dan Bradera, Thomas Bromley, Ransome E. Bryan, H. E. Butler, E. T. Carlson, C. C. Childress, J. H. Cobb, E. L. Crees, Eustace Crees, James H. Chapman, Lynn A. Curtis, Floyd Dean, Frank Docksey, Edward E. Donaldson, Donald Dubois, Stanley S. Grey, Gilbert Herrington, George Hearsey, Irving Hunter, D. D. James, Harry Hopkins, Floyd Johnson, Werner Kannenberg, John D. Kickliter, Edward H. Knight, H. M. Knowles, Richard Lapham, Roy H. Lopshire, George Martin, L. B. Mayer, P. J. Messer, Jonas E. Miller, Frank P. McLain, Johnny Nicholas, B. D. Pearson, Edsel Paulk, Albert B. Roehr, Wilfred T. Roberts, Percy Scheel, H. G. Seymour, Lynn A. Silvertooth, Robert A. Smith, Wilbur Stewart, Robert Stickney, Bill Summerall, Charles Wackerle, David G. Walesby, E. L. Weiderkehr, Forrest Williams, Bill Wilson, Clyde H. Wilson, Tom E. Wolfe, Clarence Wood, W. C. Wooten, R. B. Wyatt, William A. Wynne and Kris Yent. Members at large: Paul Keck, Stanley T. Martin, Edward B. Parkins, and Don H. Stremmel. Members in U. S. service: Giles Bailey, Frank Binz, 3rd, Fred Dailey and Russell Maxwell.

Officers of the club for 1946-47 were: Stanley Gray, president; Charles Wackerle, Donald DuBois and Paul Harris, vice-presidents; Bill Summerall, secretary; Robert Smith, treasurer; Chris Yent, Lion Tamer; Harry Hopkins, Tail Twister; and Albert B. Roehr, L. B. Mayer, W. D. Wooten, and Walter Anderson, directors.

### JUNIOR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Junior Chamber of Commerce was organized in June, 1934, with 25 charter members to enable the younger men of Sarasota to work in an organization of their own in the city's behalf. Francis C. Dart served during the remainder of 1934 as president. The presidents since then have been Thomas C. Glenn, Lamar B. Dozier, Dr. Joe C. Landess, John E. Neel, W. M. Harmon, Benjamin H. Hopkins, and Lamar B. Dozier, who served successively through 1942. World War II then robbed the organization of most of its members and it suspended activities until September, 1945, when A. H. Bayless became president.

The organization has backed every project designed to make Sarasota a better place in which to live. It was directly responsible for the revival of the Sara de Soto pageant in 1935. It led the movement for a public library (See Index: Library) and after the building was constructed, raised enough money to furnish it completely. The Junior Chamber also has played a leading role in mosquito eradication work and in 1946 carried out a county-wide eradication program.

Officers for the Junior Chamber for 1946-47 were Charles Wackerle, president; Taylor Green, first vice-president; Ben Hopkins, second vice-president; Arthur Clark, third vice-president; Robert Walters, secretary; and M. E. Russell, treasurer. Directors were W. M. Harmon, J. L. Sanders, Dale Brye, Lamar B. Dozier, William T. Summerall, Wilfred Roberts and Bayless.

### VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

Sunshine Post No. 3233, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, was chartered February 28, 1935. The charter was signed by James B. Andrews, David T. Austin, Augustus D. Bolton, Alfred B. Clark, Almer M. Felton, George G. Gault, Claude W. Jenkins, Clarence Kitelinger, John G. Kurtzacker, Joseph A. Lesson, Joseph V. Lawrence, Joseph C. Michael, Charles E. Morris, Lewis J. Rotes, and George A. Willis.

Commanders of the post have been: Lewis B. Rotes, George G. Gault, Milton R. Thomas, Walter E. Blocker, Joseph V. Lawrence, R. H. Lence, John C. Pelot, and Albert M. Ettinger.

The post owns its clubhouse at 318 S. Pineapple Avenue where facilities are available for handling the activities of the club in addition to furnishing club service for its members. The building was acquired in July, 1945.

### AMERICAN VETERANS OF WORLD WAR II

Siesta Post No. 5, American Veterans of World War II (Amvets), was organized in August, 1945, by a group of veterans of World War II. The application for a charter, submitted at the second national convention of the organization in Chicago by Col. E. E. Linsert, carried 49 names. After the charter was granted, the post held its first election of officers, November 15, 1945. Officers elected were: Donald L. Smith, commander; Col. E. E. Linsert, senior vice-commander; Charles Webber, junior vice-commander; William Higel, junior vice-commander; Howard Anderson, adjutant; William Edgar, finance officer; John Pinkerton, judge advocate; Leo Hunter, public relations officer; Robert Burns, sergeant-at-arms; and Thomas H. Bromley, historian.

The first meetings of the post were held at the V.F.W. clubhouse, later at the Elks club, and on February 18, the Amvets clubhouse at 147½ Ringling Boulevard was dedicated at an open house at which more than a thousand guests were entertained. In the summer of 1946, the post had more than 250 members. Since its organization, the post has taken a steadily increasing part in civic affairs as well as working in behalf of all veterans of World War II.

★ ★ LEST WE FORGET ★ ★

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Names of Sarasota County's men and women who served in the armed forces during World War II were displayed on an Honor Roll erected near the waterfront on Main Street by the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Disabled American Veterans. Legionnaire George Teeters is shown above speaking at services held in front of the Honor Roll on Armistice Day, 1944.

When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and plunged the United States into World War II, hundreds of men and women from Sarasota County already were in the nation's armed services, preparing to aid their country in the crisis which for months had seemed inevitable. Before the war ended on August 14, 1945, the total of the county's servicemen and women had leaped to 2,285. Of this number, 67 men and one woman made the supreme sacrifice. Their names shall live forever in the annals of the Land of Sarasota.

*To perpetuate the memory of the Sarasota County men and woman who died while in their nation's service during World War II, members of Sarasota Bay Post No. 30 of the American Legion sponsored this chapter of the Story of Sarasota.*

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ERNEST HENRY WARD

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FREDERICK WARREN PURDY

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CARLETON DOUGLAS McALLISTER

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JAMES RUSSELL MANN

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HAROLD VALLERY MICHAEL

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BENJAMIN FLOYD MULKEY, JR.

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HERBERT IRVIN SULLIVAN

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STILLMAN DAVID PECK

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RICHARD HARDING McCracken

LT. COL. WILLIAM HYATT BACHE, born July 18, 1908, Oklahoma City, Okla., son of Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Franklin Bache. Was graduated from U. S. Military Academy, 1932. Married Miss Marilou Clark, May 30, 1933. Was killed May 7, 1943, near Canton Island in the South Pacific while signal executive officer of Sixth Army. Survived by his father; his widow; three children, Margaret Clark, Robert Hyatt and William Allen Bache; two brothers, E. B. Bache, B. A. Bache, and one sister, Mrs. Margaret Bache Shollar.

LT. HAROLD HARPER BEASLEY, born December 10, 1916, Red Level, Ala., son of W. F. and Lola (Harper) Beasley. Attended Alabama Polytechnical Institute. Entered service July 9, 1941. Married Elizabeth Helen Hereford May 10, 1942. Killed April 17, 1943, at Bremen, Germany, while serving with 91st Bomber Group, 401st Squadron. Citations: Air Medal three Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C. and Purple Heart. Survived by widow and parents, and two sisters, Annie Ruth and Christine Beasley.

LT. ROSS BEASON, JR., born November 15, 1921, Salt Lake City, Utah, son of Ross and Elvera (Bong) Beason. Was graduated from Culver Military Academy and attended Washington and Lee and Kenyon colleges. Entered service April 20, 1942. Married Dorothy Louise Darwin, December 12, 1942. Killed April 15, 1944, at Castel Volturno, Italy, while with 27th Army Bomber Group, 523rd Fighter Bomber Squadron. Survived by his widow, his parents, and a son, Ross Beason, III.

LT. WALTER EASTON BELL, born May 19, 1917, Baltimore, Md., son of William H. and Salome (Easton) Bell. Educated Andover Academy, Hun School, Yale University and N. Y. U. School of Commerce. Entered service June 19, 1942. Married Barbara Bryan, January 30, 1940. Killed April 16, 1945, at Arnburg, Germany, while with Co. B, 34th Tank Battalion, Fifth Armored Division. Survived by his widow and two daughters, Frances Sayre and Nancy Winship Bell; his parents and one sister, Harriet H. Bell.

CAPT. JOHN WESLEY LONG BENBOW, born March 21, 1918, Greensboro, N. C., son of C. D. Jr., and Marjorie (Long) Benbow. Educated at Guilford College and University of North Carolina. Entered service in 1941. Married Margaret Coe, June 11, 1944. Reported as missing in action June 16, 1945, while with 457th Squadron 506th Fighter Group, stationed at Iwo Jima. Citations: Air Medal. Survived by his widow and parents.

T/SGT. HAZEL MARIE BINGNER, WAC, born September 5, 1917, Marquette, Mich., daughter of Frank R. and Ella (Holt) Bingner. Entered service in April, 1943. Died at Oro Bay, New Guinea May 15, 1945, while with Hq., Inter. Sec. Dis. Div.—Chaplain's Section Company A. Survived by her parents, a brother, Francis R. Bingner and a sister, Mrs. Esther M. Stanfield.

LT. WILLIAM DICKEY CLARKE, JR., born August 17, 1919, Philadelphia, Pa., son of William D. and Josephine (Grooket) Clarke. Educated at Sarasota High School and University of Florida. Entered service in August, 1941. Married Rebecca McDuffie, July, 1942. Killed in European area August 14, 1943, while serving as a pilot with 449 Bomber Squadron, 322 Bomber Group, AAC. Survived by his widow, his parents and two brothers, Duane G. and Eric T. Clarke.

SEAMAN 1ST CL. THOMAS WOOD CLEMENT, born September 23, 1924, Tarrytown, N. Y., son of Carl T. and Olga (Matisse) Clement. Educated at Sarasota High School. Entered service October 14, 1941. Died in Devon, England, June 21, 1944, while with Fleet Air Wing 7. Survived by his parents and sister, Mrs. Shirley Clement Schafer.

PHM. 1/C GRAHAM INGLE CRAIG, born August 26, 1916, Coatesville, Pa., son of Joseph and Alma (McQuade) Craig. He became the foster son of George S. and S. Ruhmah (Smith) Rose in 1919. Graduated from Sarasota High School. Entered service April, 1942. Killed July 21, 1944, at Guam while attached to Hdq. Co. 1st Bn., 3rd Marines 3rd Div. Survived by his foster-mother and his parents.

CPL. JOHN WILLIE DAVIS, JR., born October 29, 1911, Jakin, Ga., son of John W. and Bertha (Minter) Davis. Attended Sarasota schools. Entered service April 28, 1944. Married Arnold N. Rigby, June 13, 1932. Died January 26, 1945, in France while with the 756 Tank Battalion, 7th Army. Citations: Bronze Star and Purple Heart. Survived by his widow, a daughter Barbara Joan Davis, his mother, three brothers, Glen, Phil and Edwin and a sister, Mrs. Eugenia Wadsworth.

SHIPFITTER 3/C WALLACE WALTER DEVANE, born April 4, 1921, Quitman, Ga., son of Frank Lester and Sallie A. (Joiner) DeVane. Graduated from Sarasota High School. Entered service August 15, 1940. Killed near Gaudalcanal, November 13, 1945, while with the U.S.S. Atlanta. Citations: Presidential and Purple Heart. Survived by his parents and four sisters, Mrs. J. W. Hall, Jr., Mrs. E. B. Baley, Mrs. Calvin Meyer and Marcilyn DeVane.

S/SGT. JACK DOZIER, born December 15, 1914, Stillmore, Ga., son of William Pilcher and Mamie (Elliott) Dozier. Was graduated from Sarasota High School and attended Ringling Art School one year. Entered service August 31, 1942. Married Frances E. Brunson April 11, 1942. Killed in England July 8, 1944, when the transport plane in which he was radio operator crashed. He served in the Air Corps 309th Troop Carrier Squadron. Survived by his widow, his parents and five brothers: Vernon E., Horace G., Lamar B., W. P. Jr. and Arthur G. Dozier.

ENSIGN WALLACE BORTHWICK DRAPER, born August 16, 1923, Worcester, Mass., son of Arthur D. and Jean (Wallace) Draper. Graduated from

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FRANKLYN LAMONT TIMBERLAKE

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HUBERT CARL SCHUCHT

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ALFRED HASSELL SURRENCY

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IRVING JACOB SHOOR

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PHILIP ELBERT WALKER

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GRAHAM INGLE CRAIG

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WALLACE WALTER DeVANE

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WOODROW SMITH

Sarasota High School and attended University of Florida. Entered service December 3, 1942. Married Janice Taylor, September 14, 1944. Died October 10, 1944 at Vero Beach Naval Air Station, Vero Beach, Fla., while serving with Night Fighter Squadron, 14 B. Survived by his widow, his parents, a brother, Arthur D. Draper, Jr., and two sisters, Mrs. Charles Birdseye and Mrs. William Ridenoure.

RADIO TECH. 3/C WALTER JOSEPH DRYDEN, born in Pittsburgh, Pa., son of Walter Sydney and Martha (Black) Dryden. A graduate of Bradenton High School. Entered navy November 1, 1942. Died May 2, 1944 in the Pacific area. Survived by his parents and two sisters, Mrs. Martha R. Brooks and Barbara Jo Dryden.

LT. RUPERT EARL FOLSE, JR., born October 22, 1912, Hamburg, Miss., son of Mr. and Mrs. Rupert E. Folse, Sr. Graduated from Sarasota High School and attended Ringling Art School. Entered service January, 1942. Died October 26, 1944, near Caen, France, while with P of W Overhead Det. 2023. Citation: Good Conduct Medal. Survived by parents and a brother, Sgt. John L. Folse.

PVT. ROBERT BLAIR FRAZEE, born April 5, 1924, son of Andrew Blair and Grace (Conover) Frazee. Entered Marine Corps October 1, 1941. Died June 14, 1942, at Marine Hospital, Kirkwood, Mo., while with Co. 25, Section F, Naval Training Station (Aviation) Navy Pier, Chicago. Survived by his parents and a sister, Jane.

LT. HAROLD E. GLOVER, born October 10, 1918, Fort Barrancas, Pensacola, Florida. Son of Mr. and Mrs. Abner E. Glover. Graduated from high school at New Bern, N. C. Entered service November 18, 1941. Killed at Clovis, New Mexico, March 27, 1944, while piloting a B 29 Bomber of the 2nd Air Force 20th Bomber Command 472nd Group. Survived by his parents and a sister, Ann.

SGT. CLIFFORD NORMAN GREENWOOD, born August 29, 1911, Sarasota, Fla., son of Samuel Thomas and Lillie Viola (Morris) Greenwood. Graduated from Sarasota High School. Entered service February 19, 1941. Married Pauline Lee. Died December 30, 1944 in Belgium while with Hdqs. Co., 120th Inf. 30th Division (Old Hickory Div.) Citations: Good Conduct Medal, Bronze Star and Purple Heart. Survived by his daughter, Carola Lee Greenwood, his parents, three sisters, Mrs. Hardt Magrath, Mrs. John Lowe, Mrs. Leif Osmundson; two brothers, Paul R. and Lee S. Greenwood.

FIELD MUSICIAN 1/C JAMES HURST HALLIDAY, born May 24, 1925, son of Salvation Army Adjutant James and Llewella May (Johnson) Halliday. Completed three years at Sarasota High School. Entered service September 21, 1943. Killed October 13, 1944, Siapan, Marianas Islands, while with Hq. Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force, in the field. Survived by parents and

three sisters, Mary Christine, Llewella May and Evangeline Halliday.

CHIEF ELECT. MATE ROLAND EUGENE HARRELL, born August 9, 1909, son of John Gordon and Johnnie (Brannon) Harrell. Entered service May 14, 1926. Married Bamma Louett Kelly June 15, 1932. Died August 6, 1944, while a prisoner of war in Bilibid Prison, Manila. He had served on the U.S.S. Canopus. Survived by his widow, two sons, Russell Lee and Michael Gordon Harrell; his mother, Mrs. Johnnie Chambliss; two sisters, Mrs. Johnnie McGarvin and Mrs. Bob Marshal, and four brothers Donald, David, Lamar O., and Lt. Russell A. Harrell.

CAPT. ALBERT DEXTER HINSEY, JR., born September 6, 1918, Quincy, Fla., son of A. D. and Lillie (Blount) Hinsey. Was graduated from the Sarasota High School and the University of Florida. Entered service with the Royal Canadian Air Force September 9, 1941 and was transferred to the U. S. Air Force May 26, 1942. Killed at Messina, Sicily, June 25, 1943, while with 49th Bombardment Squadron. Citations: Distinguished Flying Cross, Oak Leaf Cluster and the Purple Heart. Survived by parents and one sister, Mrs. Hazel Hinsey Beggs.

FLIGHT SGT. HUGH BROWNING "BUDDY" JOHNSTON, born September 30, 1920, Toronto, Canada, son of Dr. W. J. and Helen M. (Browning) Johnston. Educated in Sarasota schools. Entered Royal Canadian Air Force May 13, 1940. Killed in Libya November 25, 1941. On February 15, 1946 he was posthumously awarded the Operational Wings of the R.C.A.F. Survived by his mother, one sister, Anita, and one brother, Pfc. Wilfred J. Johnston. (See Index.)

LT. EARL EUGENE JORDAN, born February 21, 1920, Martinsville, Ind., son of E. E. and Estelle (Dillman) Jordan. Educated at Martinsville schools and DePauw University. Entered service September 3, 1941. Married Patricia A. Kitzinger, February 22, 1941. Killed January 2, 1943, at St. Johns, Newfoundland, while with the 421st Bomber Squadron, Newfoundland Base Command. Survived by his widow and son, Earl Eugene Jordan III, his parents, a brother, Lloyd and two sisters, Eileen Hyland and Martha Jordan.

SGT. HARVEY BROWN KENNEDY, born July 7, 1922, Pittsburg, Kan., son of Harvey B. and Eunice S. Kennedy. Graduated from Sarasota High School, 1941 and entered service January, 1943. Reported missing in action June 5, 1945, while serving as a gunner on a B-29 on a mission over Osaka and Kobe. He was with the 482nd Squadron—505 Bomb Group. Survived by his parents and brother, Robert L. Kennedy.

LT. WILLIAM PERRY KEPHART, born September 9, 1915, Meyersdale, Pa., son of A. P. and Margaret (Dill) Kephart. Graduated from the University of North Carolina. Entered service Septem-

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WILLIAM HYATT BACHE

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ORRYL KENNETH ROBLES

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CLIFFORD NORMAN GREENWOOD

ber, 1937. Killed October 14, 1942, at Guadalcanal, while serving as a dive bomber pilot with the U.S. Aircraft Carrier Wasp. Citations: Marine Air Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Fleet Medal and Purple Heart. Citizens of Greensboro, N. C., raised over \$5,000,000 in bonds to pay for a destroyer escort which was named the USS Kephart in his memory. Survived by his parents and a sister, Margaret Kephart.

SGT. JOSEPH GLENN KIMMEL, JR., born May 3, 1920 Americus, Ga., son of Mr. and Mrs. J. G. Kimmel. Graduated from Sarasota High School and attended the University of Florida two years. Entered service October, 1941. Reported missing in action August 30, 1944, while on a weather reconnaissance mission to the Mapia and Waigeo Islands, while serving in the 15th Weather Squadron, at Biak Island. Declared officially dead in March 1946. Survived by his parents and a sister Mrs. Newton C. Hodgson.

LT. JEROME CAIROLYI KNIGHT, born January 23, 1912, Bradenton Fla., son of L. C. and Pauline (Carlton) Knight. Graduated from Sarasota High School. Entered service September 17, 1942. Married Eugenia Elizabeth Van Orden, January 13, 1934. Killed December 20, 1944, at Bastogne, Belgium, while with Co. I 3rd Bn. 506 Parachute Inf., 101st Airborne Div. Citations: Presidential Unit Citation and the Purple Heart. Survived by his widow and two daughters, Sylvia Jean and Karon LaRue Knight and his parents.

CAPT. THOMAS LEONARD LIVERMORE, born October 18, 1908, Telluride, Colo., son of Thomas Leonard, Jr., and Sibbel Hall (Duff) Livermore. Attended Sarasota grade school, Riverside Military Academy, Georgia Parks Business College, Denver and Parks Air College, St. Louis. Entered Canadian Air Force in 1940, and served as a ferry pilot with R.A.F. After studying navigation he was loaned by the R.A.F. to the A.T.C. of the U. S. Army and was serving in this capacity at the time of his death October 14, 1942, near Trinidad, B.W.I. Survived by his widow Clarine Whitney Livermore to whom he was married in January, 1935, one daughter, Barbara Kay, his mother and a sister Mrs. Jarvis L. Hardesty.

CPL. CARLETON DOUGLAS McALLISTER, born January 1, 1916, Delaware, Ark., son of J. L. and Allie Mae (Hatfield) McAllister. Attended Venice High School. Entered service September 14, 1941. Married Blanche Picala February 22, 1944. Killed at Iwo Jima March 4, 1945, while with Co. A 31st Repl. Draft F.M.F. 5th Division U. S. Marine Corps. Citation: Purple Heart. Survived by his widow, his parents and three sisters, Violet McAllister, Mrs. Oscar Sandoval and Mrs. W. A. Butt.

LT. RICHARD HARDING McCracken, born October 28, 1923, Colonia, N. J., son of William H. and Berthe B. (Wagar) McCracken. Attended Nokomis High School. Entered service February 18, 1943. Killed June 1, 1945, at Cordele, Ga., while stationed at Turner Air Field, Albany, Ga. Survived by his par-

ents and four brothers, Wilford H. Jr., Edward D., Kenneth J. and Howard L. McCracken.

TECH SGT. GEORGE EPHRAM McGEE, born August 19, 1919, Morgantown, W. Va., son of George Ephram and Anna (Jenkins) McGee. Graduated from Sarasota High School. Entered service November 7, 1941. Married Jessie Adams Duckwall, January 15, 1943. Died February 3, 1945, at Schlausenback Germany, as a result of multiple shrapnel wounds received while serving with Hq. Co. 3rd Bn. 8th Infantry. Citations: Presidential Unit Citation, Bronze Star, Purple Heart and Good Conduct Medal. Survived by his widow and son, George Ephram McGee, one sister Mrs. Hilda G. Richards and four brothers, William, Harry J., Harold G. and Claude I.

SEAMAN 2/C JAMES RUSSELL MANN, born May 15, 1923, Dayton, Ohio, son of Frank and Anna (Shallockes) Mann. Attended Sarasota High School. Entered service March, 1942. Died Sept. 25, 1942, in the Atlantic area while serving on the S.S. West Chetac. Citation: Purple Heart. Survived by his mother and step-father Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Elkins.

ENSIGN WILLIAM MANIERRE MANN, born July 27, 1918, Chicago, Ill., the son of William B. and Julie E. (Manierre) Mann. Educated at Bell School, Lake Forest, Ill., Sarasota High School, and the Military Academy at Northwestern University. Entered the Navy Air Corps July 18, 1942. Was shot down over Clark Field, Luzon Island, in the Philippines November 6, 1945, while photographing the field from air. Citations: American Area Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Area Campaign Medal, Bronze Star and Purple Heart. Survived by his mother and sister.

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WILLIAM MANN

FLYING OFFICER JONES MONROE MATHERLY, JR., born February 15, 1916, Bradenton, Fla., son of Jones Monroe Sr., and Mary Jane (Joyner) Matherly. Graduated from Sarasota High School. Joined Royal Canadian Air Force July 24, 1940. Killed February 1, 1944, at Wiltshire, England while serving with No. 427 Sqdn. "U" Lion Squadron—R.C.A.F. Citation: Memorial Cross. Survived by parents, a sister, Marion M. Peck and two brothers, Ralph E. and U. G. Matherly.

CPL. CONSTANTIN MATAUSCH, born May 10, 1906 in Russia, son of Frank and Louise (Lampe) Matausch. Entered service February 20, 1941. Killed July 17, 1944, near St. Lo, France, while with Co. "B" 120th Inf. 30th Div. Citation: Purple Heart. Survived by his mother, a sister, Antoinette and three

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WALLACE BORTHWICK DRAPER

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GEORGE EPHRAM MCGEE

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ELMER LORIN RUSSELL

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JOHN WILLIE DAVIS, JR.

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GLENN RICHARD PETERS

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CONSTANTINE MATAUSCH

brothers, Frank Jr., George William and Alfred Matausch.

SEAMAN 1st/C CHARLES WILLIAM MAYS, born February 22, 1915, Long Boat Key, Florida, son of W. P. and Sadie (Grantham) Mays. Graduated from Sarasota High School. Entered service December 11, 1941. Died at Crews, Md., March 22, 1942, while with the United States Coast Guard. Survived by his mother and step-father, Mr. and Mrs. F. T. Pinard, a brother James B. Mays, a half-brother, Ted Pinard and a half-sister, Madge Pinard Boggs.

CHIEF PETTY OFFICER HAROLD VALLERY MICHAEL, born July 17, 1900, Ft. Morgan, Colo., son of John E. and Mary (Peckinpugh) Michael. Entered service February 6, 1942. Married to Gladys Louis Flynn Lytton in June, 1940. Died July 30, 1944, at Tallahassee, Fla., while with the U. S. Coast Guard. Survived by his widow and a daughter, Dorothy Michael Pohocsky, two step-sons, Fred M. and Edwin Allen Lytton; one step-daughter, S2/c Nancy Lytton; his father, a brother, Glenn, and two sisters Mrs. Margaret Salasana and Eunice Smith.

PVT. BENJAMIN FLOYD MULKEY, JR., born February 20, 1926, Smithville, Ga., son of Benjamin F. and Frances E. (Bates) Mulkey. Attended Sarasota schools. Entered service April 28, 1944. Missing in action at Mindanao May 8, 1945 while with Co. E. 21st Inf. (Victory Division). Survived by his mother, Mrs. Frances Hand, four sisters: Mrs. Gertha Mullinnix, Mrs. Flora Field, Mrs. Lillie Belle Morris and Mrs. Minnie Conley; and four brothers: E. C., James, Frank and Donald Mulkey.

CPL. HUGH EDWARD CARY NEVILL, born Sept. 22, 1907, London, England, son of Hugh Lewis and Dorothy (Ellington) Nevill. Educated at Wellington College and the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, Eng. Entered service March 17, 1943. Married Marjorie Morland Carter April 29, 1940. He died in England January 3, 1945, after having been invalided there from France where he served in Battery B 695th Armored Field Artillery. Citation: Presidential Unit Citation and Good Conduct Medal. Survived by his widow and son Hugh Timothy Allen Nevill; his mother and brother, Major William Nevill of Surrey, England.

LT. JEFF LOWERY PEARSON, born July 17, 1915, Chattanooga, Tenn., son of Clem B. and Willie E. (Williamson) Pearson. Graduated from Sarasota High School and attended University of Florida a semester. Entered service March 2, 1942. Married Lillian C. Nolan November 30, 1939. Killed January 26, 1944, at Crowborough, England, while with 555th Squadron 386 Bomber Group. Citations: Air Medal, three Oak Leaf clusters and Presidential Unit Citation. Survived by his widow, his mother, three brothers, B. D., C. B. and Frank R. Pearson and three sisters. Mrs. James Adkinson, Mrs. Creed Rymer and Mrs. Robt. O. Pitts.

LT. STILLMAN DAVID PECK, born February 18, 1916, Pomona, Calif., son of Mr. and Mrs. Stillman Homer Peck. Educated at University of Hawaii and Pomona Jr. College. Entered service November 12, 1941. Married Marion Amelia Matherly, August 23, 1942. Died July 5, 1943, while with the 305th Fighter Squadron at Dale Mabry Field, Florida. Survived by his widow, his parents and two sisters, Felicia and Bonnie Peck.

PVT. GLENN RICHARD PETERS, born December 30, 1919, Verna, Fla., son of Joseph J. and Ina (McLeod) Peters. Graduated from Sarasota High School. Entered service June 17, 1944. Married Virginia Ernestine Stroud, June 28, 1941. Killed March 1, 1945, at Iwo Jima while with Co. "E", 30th Replacement draft, 4th Marine Division. Citation: Purple Heart. Survived by his widow and daughter, Glenda Virginia Peters, his parents, a sister Betty and four brothers, Norman, Charles, Edward and Carl.

LT. COMDR. FREDERICK WARREN PURDY, born December 4, 1911, Chicago, Ill., son of Warren F. and Marie (Hubbard) Purdy. Educated at United States Naval Academy and continued on active duty thereafter. Married Molly Pagan February 22, 1942. He was executive officer of the U.S.S. Strong on operations in the Kula Gulf at the time of his death, July 4, 1943. Citations: American Defense Service Medal (Fleet Clasp), American Area Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Area Campaign Medal, (U.S.S. Strong), Silver Star Medal and Purple Heart. Survived by his widow, his mother, a sister, Elisabeth and a brother Richard H. Purdy. In recognition of his heroic service, the U.S. Navy named a new destroyer the U.S.S. Purdy in his honor. It was christened at Boston July 16, 1944.

LT. ANDRE GARDNER REMBERT, born September 18, 1921, Ashville, N. C., son of Andre and Janet Elizabeth (Gardner) Rembert. Educated in Sarasota schools, three years at St. Leo's College, and 2½ years at North Carolina State College, Raleigh, N. C. Entered service July 27, 1942. Killed at Leyte May 9, 1945 while with the 57th T. C. Squadron, 375th T. C. Group. Survived by his father and mother, Mrs. Janet R. Braley.

1st LT. JOHN FITE ROBERTSON, JR., born November 26, 1921, Lebanon, Tenn., son of John Fite and Martha Lynne (Buchanan) Robertson. Educated in Sarasota schools, Castle Military Academy, Lebanon, Davidson College Davidson, N. C., and the University of Florida. Commissioned 2nd Lt. of Infantry, O.R.C. in spring of 1942. Entered service November 6, 1942. Died from wounds July 11, 1944, near Cecina, Italy. Citations: Silver Star, Purple Heart, Combat Infantryman's Badge and Distinguished Unit Citation with two clusters. Survived by parents and a brother 1st Lt. William E. Robertson. (See Index)

PVT. ORRYL KENNETH ROBLES, born October 19, 1925, Manila, P. I., son of Col. Orryl Samuel and Mildred Kerwin (Maloke) Robles. Entered service

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GEORGE A. SURLS

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ROBERT ELLIS RULE

January, 1944, when a senior in high school. Killed November 4, 1944, in Luxembourg serving with Co. F 32nd Cav. Recon. Sqn. Survived by his parents, a brother, Francis P. Robles, and three sisters: Mrs. John C. Bass, Nancy M. Robles and Theresa K. Robles.

T/SGT. PAUL NELSON ROTES, born June 15, 1917, Barberton, Ohio, son of James G. and Nellie E. (Koch) Rotes. Entered service May 27, 1941, and served as a radio gunner with the 451 Bomb Squadron, 8th Army Air Force. Was killed January 21, 1944 at Essex, England. Citations: D.F.C., A.M. and 3 Oak Leaf Clusters. Survived by his parents and two brothers: John J. and Eugene R. Rotes.

TECH. 4TH GRADE WILLIAM EDWIN ROYAL, born July 26, 1914, Ray City, Ga., son of Mr. and Mrs. William Franklin Royal. Entered service November 7, 1941. Married Lois R. Cookson, September 9, 1941. Killed August 29, 1944, at Villers Cotterets, France, while with 33rd Field Artillery Bn. 1st Infantry Div. Citations: Bronze Star and Purple Heart. Survived by widow and son, David Graham Royal and a brother, J. Hobson Royal.

A.M.M. 2/c ROBERT ELLIS RULE, born March 31, 1924, Columbus, O., son of Ellis and Margaret (Appel) Rule. Attended Sarasota High School. Entered service May 13, 1941. Killed November 24, 1943, Tarawa, aboard the U.S.S. Liscome Bay. Citations: Presidential Unit Citation and the Purple Heart. Survived by his parents and two brothers, James and Joseph Rule.

CPL. ELMER LORIN RUSSELL, born February 4, 1915, Sarasota, Fla., son of Benjamin H. and Carrie Belle (Jones) Russell. Graduated from Sarasota High School. Entered service June 19, 1941. Fatally wounded February 14, 1945, while giving aid to wounded men during battle for Bilibid Prison in Manila. He was a medical aid man with Company E, 148th Infantry Regiment, 37th Div. Citations: Distinguished Service Cross, Presidential Unit Citation and the Purple Heart. Survived by his parents and three sisters, Eleanor and Dorothy Russell and Bertha Surette.

CAPT. HUBERT CARL SCHUCHT, born June 15, 1914, Jacksonville, Fla., son of Walter and Emma (Randall) Schucht. Graduated from Sarasota High School and the University of Florida. Entered service January 10, 1941. Killed in France August 23, 1944, while with 78th Field Artillery, 2nd Armored Division. Survived by his mother.

S/SGT. JASPER (JACK) NELSON SCOTT, born May 29, 1923, Bradenton, Fla., son of Taylor Carver and Edith Harper (Harris) Scott. Was graduated from Sarasota High School and attended the University of Chattanooga, one and one-half years. Entered service March 5, 1943. Reported missing on January 20, 1945, while on a mission over Suichwan, China. He was a gunner with the 493rd Bomb Squadron (H) Bomb Group. The War Department officially listed him as dead February 10, 1946. Survived by

his parents and two brothers: Lt. Taylor C. Scott, Jr., and Thomas E. Scott.

PVT. IRVING JACOB SHOOR, born January 6, 1920, Albany, N. Y., son of Benjamin and Sarah (Snyder) Shoor. Attended Sarasota schools and Union College, Schenectady, N. Y. Entered service January, 1943. Married Betty Cynthia Manness, September, 1940. Died March 31, 1943, Utica, N. Y. while with the U. S. Army Signal Corps. Survived by his widow, his parents and a sister, Mrs. Martin Abeloze.

WARRANT OFFICER GEORGE CAMERON SHUTE, born September 21, 1897, Stamford, Conn., son of Augustus Burnham and Elizabeth Jeanette (Brodie) Shute. Educated at Hebron Academy, Hebron, Me. and the University of Maine, Orono, Me. Entered service June 25, 1943. Married Alida Alma Maxwell, July 19, 1919. Died January 24, 1944, at Myrtle Beach, S. C., while with 3rd. Air Force, Crash Boat Division. Survived by his widow and son, Lt. (jg) George C. Shute, Jr., USCG, his daughter, Miss Betty Shute, PhM 1/c USNR, his mother and step-father, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest A. Smith and a sister, Mrs. Frank C. Martin.

ELEC. ENG. THOMAS CRAWFORD SINES, JR., born August 9, 1902, Zanesville, Ohio, son of Thomas Crawford, Sr., and Florence (Mitchell) Sines. Graduated from a Chicago high school and the Doyle Electrical School. Joined the Canadian Air Force as an electrical engineer April, 1941. Killed November, 1941, when his ship was torpedoed 650 miles west of Ireland. Survived by parents, four sisters, Mrs. Frances Stephens, Mrs. Herbert Dryman, Mrs. Grady Murphy, Mrs. Hilton Odom, two brothers, Frank and John and a half-brother George.

PVT. EDWIN MYRON SKINNER, born February 26, 1925, Manchester, Conn., son of Raymond F. and Jeannette (Lettney) Skinner. Graduated from Sarasota High School and attended Peabody Conservatory of Music. Entered service May, 1943. Killed near Terrelle, Italy, January 30, 1944, while with Co. G. 142nd Infantry, 36th Division. Citations: Silver Star and Purple Heart. Survived by parents and a brother, Raymond F. Skinner, Jr., U.S.N.R.

PFC. CHRISTOPHER CLARK SMITH, born June 27, 1921, Clarksburg, W.Va., son of Harold M. and Mary A. (Clark) Smith. Educated in Sarasota schools. Entered service August, 1942. Married Sara S. Smith November 24, 1941. Reported missing in action D-Day, June 5, 1944, Cherbourg, France, while with Co. 1, 506th Paratroop Infantry, 101 Airborne Division. Survived by his widow and a daughter, Barbara Ann Smith and his mother.

PFC. WOODROW SMITH, born October 29, 1915, Comer, Ga., son of James Henry and Elizabeth (Butler) Smith. Graduated from Comer High School. Entered service May 20, 1941. Died in Belgium December 18, 1944, from wounds received in Germany, November 19, 1944, while with Co. H, 194th Reg.

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GEORGE CAMERON SHUTE

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JEROME CAROLYI KNIGHT

99th Div. Citation: Purple Heart. Survived by one sister, Mrs. Roberta Wood and five brothers, S. A. Smith, C. R. Smith, H. H. Smith, D. C. Smith and J. O. Smith.

LT. HERBERT IRWIN SULLIVAN, born December 27, 1918, Fitzgerald, Ga., son of Harry Irwin and Eunice (Graves) Sullivan. Attended Sarasota schools and Fort Union Military Academy, Ft. Union, Va. Enlisted in the air corps before Pearl Harbor and received his wings in December, 1942. Killed March 5, 1943, at Eagle Pass, Texas. Survived by two sisters, Mrs. W. P. Harrison and Mrs. Guy White, Jr., his step-mother, Mrs. Harry Sullivan and an aunt Mrs. J. F. Bispham.

PVT. GEORGE A. SURLS, born March 4, 1918, Venice, Fla., son of Walter B. and Mable E. (Mansfield) Surls. Graduated from Venice-Nokomis High School. Entered service October 4, 1943. Married Anna Lisa M. Holmberg, June 2, 1940. Killed January 13, 1945, Alsace, France, while with 180th Inf. Co. D. 45th Div. Survived by his widow, his parents, a sister Mrs. John T. Hill, Jr., and a brother, Charles M. Surls.

PVT. ALFRED HASSELL SURRENCY, born July 10, 1925, Sarasota, Fla., son of Winder Hillman and Willie Esther (Hassell) Surrency. Educated in Sarasota public schools. Entered service December, 1943. Killed August 7, 1944 during an attack on Hill 203, near Vire, France, while with Co. "F", 116th Infantry, 29th Div. Buried: Grave #176, Row 9, Plot "A" LeChene-Guerin, France. Citation: Purple Heart. Survived by his parents; mother since deceased.

SGT. FRANKLYN LAMONT TIMBERLAKE, born September 1, 1918, Stevenson, Ala., son of Phillip

Franklin and Mae (Bobo) Timberlake. Entered service September 1939. Killed March 19, 1943, New Guinea, while with 5th Air Force, 90th Bombardment, 3rd Group. Citations: Citation of Honor from Gen. H. H. Arnold, Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Clusters, and Purple Heart. Survived by his parents, one brother Sgt. Martin B. Timberlake and two sisters, Dorothy and Lorraine Timberlake.

PFC. RUFUS HUGH TUCKER, born July 23, 1923, Manatee, Fla., son of Fitzhugh Lee and Bessie (Conyer) Tucker. Entered Maritime Service August 6, 1941 and was inducted into the U. S. Army January 13, 1943. Died June 12, 1943, Camp Haan, California while with Bat. C, 226 A.A.A. S. L. Bn. Citation Presidential Unit Citation. Survived by his parents and a brother, Tilden Tucker.

COX'N PHILIP ELBERT WALKER, born March 12, 1925, Manatee County, son of Fred Elbert and Viola Florence (Gray) Walker. Entered service May 12, 1942. Died December 14, 1944 at a Base Hospital in the Pacific area while with the U.S. Navy Third Fleet. Citation: Purple Heart. Survived by his parents, five sisters, Mrs. Roy Whitted, Mrs. W. Drawdy, Mrs. A. Sudbury, Florence and Joy Ann Walker and one brother, Charlie Walker.

PFC. ERNEST HENRY WARD, born September 18, 1918, Millville, Fla., son of William Pete and Irene May (Davis) Ward. Graduated from Sarasota High School. Entered service February 17, 1941. Killed in France, October 1, 1944, while with Co. L, 157th Infantry, 45th Div. 7th Army. Citations: Two Purple Hearts, three Good Conduct Medals and Best Sharpshooter Medal. Survived by his parents and a brother Allen B. Ward.

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JAMES HURST HALLIDAY

WILLIAM PERRY KEPHART

CHRISTOPHER CLARK SMITH

PFC. ORRIN SHELBY WELLS, born Nov. 21, 1923, Omaha, Nebr., son of Orrin Master and Helen (Shelby) Wells. Graduated from Sarasota High School and attended University of Florida nearly two years. Member of Kappa Sigma (Delta-Delta chapter). Entered service April 6, 1943. Died November 12, 1944, at 12th Evacuation Hospital, Nancy, France while with Co. A. 104th Inf. Reg. 26th (Yankee) Div. Citations: Good Conduct Medal, Bronze Star and Purple Heart. Survived by his parents.

S/SGT. HENRY YOUNG WILLIS, born June 2, 1917, Tampa, Fla., son of Thomas Young and Eva Mae (Harrison) Willis. Attended Bradenton High School. Entered service November 5, 1941. On May 4, 1941, was married to Mildred Amelia Merry. He was reported missing in action July 8, 1944, while serving

with the V Air Force Service Command at Paupan, New Guinea. Officially listed dead March, 1946. Survived by his widow, one sister, Nora Mae Singleton, and two brothers, Thomas Hill and Robert James.

PRIVATE RICHARD D. BARBER, born September 13, 1923, Tylor, Fla., son of Henry and Rosia (Johnson) Barber. Entered service January 30, 1943. Married Willie Mae Bess March 8, 1942. Died in France August 25, 1944 while with 3195 Q.M. sv. Co. Survived by his widow and parents.

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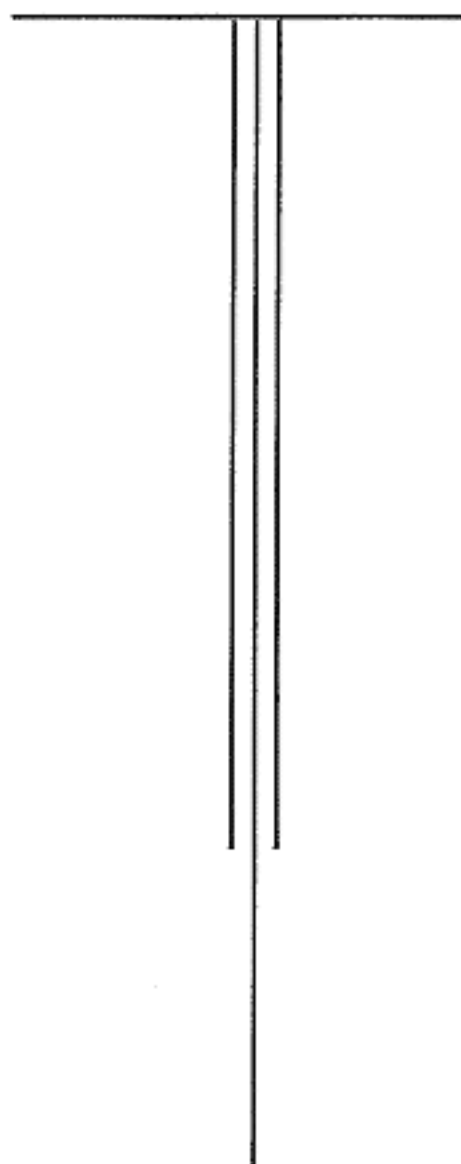
RICHARD D. BARBER

*The above chapter of The Story of Sarasota was sponsored by members of the Sarasota Bay Post No. 30 of the American Legion to perpetuate the memory of the Sarasota County men and women who died while in their nation's service during World War II.*



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WHO'S WHO  
IN  
SARASOTA



"History is the essence of innumerable biographies."

—*Thomas Carlyle.*

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## WILLIAM H. WHITAKER

William H. Whitaker, the first settler in the Sarasota Bay region, was born in Savannah, Ga., August 1, 1821. Details regarding his early life, his settling here, and his experiences as a pioneer are given in Chapter II.

On June 10, 1851, Mr. Whitaker was married to Mary Jane Wyatt, youngest daughter of Colonel William Wyatt and his wife Mary, who were among the first settlers who founded the village of Manatee, on the Manatee River. (Also see Chapter II).

Mr. and Mrs. Whitaker had eleven children: Nancy, who became the wife of John Helveston; Louise, who became the wife of Thomas Gordon Edmondson; Furman, who later became a physician; Hamlin Valentine, who married Ella Drew and served fourteen years as county commissioner in Manatee County; William, who in 1946 was still living in Manatee; Charles Chaires, now a Tampa attorney and banker; Carrie, who died when she was 16 years old; Eddie, who died when a small child; Emil, who later practiced law in Tampa; Flora, who became the wife of J. C. Martin, of Tampa, and Grace, who died when she was six years old.

Many of the Whitaker children played active parts in the development of Sarasota and many of their descendants are still prominent in the affairs of the Florida West Coast.

Mr. Whitaker, who served at one time as sheriff of Manatee County, died November 18, 1888. Mrs. Whitaker, who later moved to Tampa, died March 6, 1908. Both are buried in the old family burial plot on 18th Street near Broadway.

Mr. and Mrs. John Helveston, who were the first settlers in what is now known as Indian Beach, had two children, Fannie and Furman Harper. On July 17, 1897, Furman married Ida May Page, and their daughter, Mabel Stuart, is now the wife of Homer Hebb. In his boyhood days, Furman helped his father farm and fish; from 1908 until his death in 1941, he was engaged in the well drilling business. Mrs. Ida May Helveston was active for many years in the Woman's Club, United Daughters of the Confederacy, the Order of Eastern Star, and other organizations.

## LAURA FEDONIA TATUM

Mrs. Laura Fedonia Tatum, known throughout Sarasota County as "Aunt Donnie" was born at Ft. Hamer Crossing on the Manatee River July 10, 1859, the daughter of Isaac A. and Elizabeth (Brown) Redd. Her father, who was a Baptist minister for many years, founded the community now known as Bee Ridge (q.v.). Her brother, Theodore W. Redd, was born February 17, 1861.

On January 12, 1874, "Aunt Donnie" was married to Sebe C. Rawls. They had five children: Hilton, George, Addie Bell, Charles and Texas. Mr. Rawls died September 22, 1884. Exactly one year later "Aunt Donnie" was married to William Harve Tatum, the son of George and Lucy Tatum. They

settled on a 40-acre tract known today as the Tatum place in East Bee Ridge. Their children are: Mrs. Ida Hand, Isaac A., Ada Driggers, Beckie Hull, Agnes Lowe, Edna Platt, Lawrence, and Clara Mae Nash. All of her children are living except Texas Rawls who died in 1904 and Ida Hand who died February 7, 1935. Mr. Tatum died May 22, 1924. Mrs. Tatum makes her home with her daughter, Mrs. Nash, in Sarasota.

## AUGUSTUS MARION WILSON

Augustus Marion Wilson was born in Thomas County, Ga., December 26, 1850, the son of Judge and Mrs. James Thomas Wilson.

He married Calladonia Crum December 31, 1868, and a few years later came to Florida, settling near Myakka where he conducted a store and was postmaster for more than thirty years. He later became one of the leading cattlemen in this part of the state.

Mr. Wilson played a prominent part in the division of Manatee County which resulted in the creation of Sarasota County. Earlier, he had been state senator for one term, member of the state legislature for three terms, member of the Manatee County commissioners for one term, a member of the Manatee County school board for eight years, and served twice as census enumerator. He also served two years as tax assessor of Manatee County and was the first tax collector of the new Sarasota County.

Mr. Wilson was Indian agent for one year and visited all the Seminole Indians in Florida in a fruitless effort to get them to accept homesteads and become citizens. He owned the third phone in what is now Sarasota County, bearing the expense of extending the line from the Reaves home in Fruitville to Myakka.

Mr. and Mrs. Wilson had twelve children: Solon G., Cullen Bryant, Francis, Bertha Florence, Julia Viola, Alice Mabel, Arnot Estley, Shelby Augustus, Robin Carlisle, Opal Claire, Ruth and Rodney Crum. Senator Wilson died October 8, 1931.

## CHARLES L. REAVES

Charles L. Reaves was born in Georgia August 12, 1847. When a young man, he came to what is now Sarasota County and became the founder of the community now known as Fruitville.

After new settlers came, Mr. Reaves was appointed the first postmaster at Fruitville. He married Martha Tatum in 1875. Mr. and Mrs. Reaves had four children: O. K., born October 16, 1877, for a number of years circuit judge for this circuit and now a practicing attorney in Tampa; Frances Rebecca, born February 3, 1882, who later married Dr. C. B. Wilson; George Franklin, born February 24, 1888, and Edythe Mae Reaves, born December 13, 1891.

Prior to the founding of the school in Fruitville, Mr. Reaves hired private teachers to tutor his children and the children of neighbors. He later furnished

the land and built the public school at Fruitville, deeding the property to the school board. The building was used until the new consolidated school was constructed and the old school was then sold by the school board.

Mr. Reaves owned the second phone in what is now Sarasota County. He bore the expense of building his own line from Sarasota to Fruitville. He also paid a portion of the cost of building the first highway from Sarasota to Fruitville, sixty years ago. Mr. Reaves died September 17, 1931. Mrs. Reaves, who was born November 27, 1853, died July 13, 1935.

### FANNIE CROCKER CURTIS

Mrs. Fannie Crocker Curtis, the oldest living "native daughter" of Sara Sota, was born on July 7, 1873, daughter of Peter and Sophia (Crane) Crocker. Her father, a native of New York, fought in the Union Army in the Civil War and came to Florida after the war ended to serve as a lighthouse keeper near Key West. There he met and married Miss Crane, daughter of Col. and Mrs. H. A. Crane, descendant of one of Florida's first pioneer families.

One of her uncles, Henry L. Crane, was born in the old governor's mansion in St. Augustine, Florida, fought with United States troops in two Seminole



FANNIE CROCKER CURTIS

Wars, and for forty years served as a judge. He died in Tampa June 30, 1930, at the age of 95.

Mr. and Mrs. Crocker settled on the Bayfront in 1872 and soon afterward bought a tract of land on what is now Bee Ridge road near Osprey Avenue. He there built a home which is still standing and is occupied by Mrs. Curtis. It is known as "the old Crocker Place."

When Mrs. Curtis was a child, this section of Florida was truly a frontier region, and she well remembers how the panthers screamed at night and wild deer boldly entered the garden even during the day time. One of her earliest tasks was to scare the wild turkeys away from the family pea patch. The turkeys were so numerous that they usually succeeded in gobbling up most of the peas despite everything she could do. She vividly remembers the time when it was a common sight to see alligators in every swamp and she recalls how she used to enjoy seeing mother coons taking their babies for a stroll.

Mr. Crocker grew the first tobacco ever grown in this part of Florida from seed sent him by her uncle in Cuba. He gave tobacco plants to his neighbors and during the next growing season they vied with one another to see which could grow the best leaf. Some of it was used to make cigars and some was used for cut plug. The early settlers also were grateful to the Crocker family for introducing coffee growing in this section. Mrs. Crocker found some coffee beans which had sprouted in a large bag she had purchased, and planted them. Soon the plants were loaded with beans which she dried for use. Many of the settlers secured plants from her and soon were growing their own coffee.

Fannie Crocker was married March 6, 1904 to E. B. Grantham. They had five children: Trilby, of Buffalo, N. Y.; Maggie who died July 14, 1942; Victor and Rodney, of Sarasota, and Mabel, now Mrs. Dale Monroe, of Lake Bluff, Ill.

For many years Mr. and Mrs. Grantham owned a grocery store and inn on the site of the present Sarasota Hotel. They donated two lots on Main Street so that the Seaboard would have a site for a depot. At that time they had extensive holdings of Main Street property.

On May 22, 1938 Mrs. Grantham was married to Zanard B. Curtis.

Mrs. Curtis is a member of the First Methodist Church and was a charter member of the congregation. She was active in civic work for many years, having taken a prominent part in club and lodge activities. She is a member of Rebekah Lodge No. 37.

### ARTHUR BRITTON EDWARDS

Arthur Britton Edwards was born October 2, 1874, on the mainland shore of Sarasota Bay in what is now the northern part of Sarasota. He was the eldest son of John L. and Mellie Frances (Ange) Edwards. His father was the descendant of an old Florida family and his mother came here with her parents from South Carolina.

A truly self-made man, Mr. Edwards grew up in a primitive, pioneer community where educational opportunities were almost non-existent. But what he lacked in opportunities, he made up for in determination and zeal. Gifted with an open and inquiring mind, he began learning when a tiny barefoot youngster—and he is still learning today, adding to a store of knowledge which is envied by many university graduates with masters' degrees.

He was first taught by Prof. T. C. Callan, an Irishman "who came from nowhere and went none knows where"—a man who loved nature, and life, and had an uncanny faculty of being able to impart his knowledge to others. The professor lived in a little cabin near the Edwards' home and John Edwards employed him to teach his children for a number of years. Later, Arthur and his brothers walked five miles morning and afternoon to and from public school.

Before Mr. Edwards was fifteen years old, both his parents died and he was left with the responsibility of caring for three younger brothers.

He found employment with pioneer cattle men until 1898 when he joined the Quartermasters Department of the United States Army and was assigned to a responsible position during the American occupation of Cuba at the close of the Spanish-American War.

After returning to the States Mr. Edwards was married on July 22, 1900 to Fannie F. Lowe, granddaughter of Jesse Knight, founder of Horse and Chaise (q.v.). Shortly afterwards he was appointed county road supervisor in the fifth commissioners' district of Manatee County, of which the Land of Sarasota was then a part.

In 1903, when the Seaboard railroad was extended southward from Tampa, Mr. Edwards opened the first real estate and insurance office in Sarasota, then a small sleepy fishing village of 300 population.

Loyal to his native land and ambitious to achieve, he dedicated himself to the proposition that a modern city should be built at the place of his birth on Sarasota Bay. Neither Mr. Edwards nor the town at that time had the funds to advertise the great natural advantages of the Sarasota Bay district to the outside world. He therefore conceived a novel idea of reaching potential home seekers and investors. He wrote to the development and colonization departments of leading railroads throughout the country and asked them to send him the names of persons inquiring about Florida. Long lists soon began pouring in, and Edwards wrote personal letters to each person who had asked for information. He advertised Sarasota far and wide and, as a result of his efforts, many persons were attracted here.

As the community progressed, Mr. Edwards became active in the civic, political and industrial life of Sarasota and the surrounding territory. In his real estate operations he was not so much a broker as an owner and developer. He is now devoting his time exclusively to the general real estate and land appraisal business.



ARTHUR BRITTON EDWARDS

Mr. Edwards was the first elected tax assessor of the town of Sarasota, serving from 1907 through 1913. When Sarasota was incorporated as a city he was elected as the first mayor to serve under the new city charter, taking office January 1, 1914. He declined to run when his term expired but he was again elected in 1918 to head the city through 1919 and 1920.

Mr. Edwards played a leading part in the creation of Sarasota County and when the new county came into existence, he was commissioned by Gov. Cary A. Hardee to establish the tax assessor's office and write the first tax books.

He has been a continuous member of the Chamber of Commerce since it was first organized in 1904 as the Board of Trade. He served as its early secretary and later as president. For many years, he was a school trustee. He was the first president of the Sarasota Citrus Growers Association, a charter member of the Sarasota County Fish and Game Association and later its president, and is a former member of the State Game and Fresh Water Fish Association.

Mr. Edwards is now serving the fifth year as a member of the Florida Board of Forestry and Parks and recently was elected to the vice-presidency. He is also serving the fourth year and a member of the City Board of Adjustment. He was vice-president and a director for many years of the first bank or-

ganized in Sarasota. He also organized and operated the first land title abstract company in Sarasota County. He was appointed assistant commander-in-chief of the Sons of Confederate Veterans. In 1935, Sarasota Bay Post No. 30 American Legion awarded him a Community Service medal for the part he played in the creation of Myakka State Park.

In his early life, Mr. Edwards was active in Masonry and is now the senior pastmaster of his lodge and a Shriner. He is an honorary member of the Kiwanis Club.

Mr. and Mrs. Edwards have four daughters: Louise, Pauline, Frances and Martha, all musicians. For many years, Mrs. Edwards has been active in the Woman's Club and young people's work.

### DR. CULLEN BRYANT WILSON

Dr. Cullen Bryant Wilson, son of Mr. and Mrs. A. M. Wilson, was born in the eastern part of what is now Sarasota County July 11, 1878. He was educated at the South Florida Military Academy (now the University of Florida), and the University of Alabama Medical School.

Dr. Wilson was a practicing physician in Sarasota from 1907 to 1941. He owned the first automobile in the town. He was a member of the First Methodist Church and served for many years on the board of stewards. In 1924 and 1925, he was president of the First Bank & Trust Co. and from 1925 to 1941, president of the First Trust Co. of Sarasota. He served on the staff of the Sarasota Hospital from the time it was founded up to the time of his death.

On September 26, 1904, he was married to Frances Rebecca Reaves, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles L. Reaves, of Fruitville. They had two children: Reaves Augustus Wilson, a physician and, during World War II, a major in the Army Medical Corps; and Clyde H. Wilson (q.v.).

Dr. Wilson died February 24, 1941.

### CARRIE SPENCER ABBE

Carrie Spencer Abbe, postmistress of Sarasota for 31 years, was born in Bolton, Conn., in 1857. She came here in 1878 on her honeymoon with her husband, Dr. Myron Abbe, a dentist, who was a cousin of Prof. Charles E. Abbe, murdered on December 27, 1884, by the Vigilantes (q.v.).

Mrs. Abbe was appointed postmistress on November 4, 1891, following the death of Postmaster Robert Greer. She held the office until August 16, 1922 when she resigned.

Mrs. Abbe's service to the community was so outstanding that the Sarasota Times stated at the time of her resignation: "When the history of Sarasota is written there is no person who will stand out more prominently in its pioneer days than this dearly loved woman who has been a mother to everyone in sorrow and distress."



CARRIE SPENCER ABBE

Mrs. Abbe was more than just a civil servant. In addition to handling, without help for many years, all the mail which came into and went out of Sarasota, she took care of the town's first telephone. When a call came in for anyone, Mrs. Abbe trudged through the sand to relay the message. For many years she conducted a boarding house to supplement her meager earnings from the government. Despite all her work she found time to help with civic projects and was one of the most tireless workers of the Woman's Town Improvement Society. Unaided she painted all the trash barrels which the Society placed in the business section to stop Main Street from being littered with debris.

She was a charter member of Sarasota Rebekah Lodge No. 37, Order of Eastern Star, and of the Woman's Club. Mrs. Abbe died November 19, 1940, and was buried in Rosemary Cemetery.

### HENRY HAWKINS

Henry Hawkins, pioneer cattleman and oldest resident of Sarasota County, was born in South Carolina in 1854. His parents came to Manatee County in 1857 and settled at Braden Creek. In 1881, he married Rebecca Tatum, daughter of George and Lucy Tatum, pioneer settlers of "Tatum Ridge."

After being married, Mr. and Mrs. Hawkins settled near the Myakka River region. He became one of the largest cattlemen in this section, at one time owning about 2,200 head of cattle as well as 1,600 sheep and 1,200 head of hogs.

Mr. and Mrs. Hawkins had five children: Will, Frank, Andrew, Mollie and Lizzie. After his wife's death in 1893, he married Hannah Mann, of Bartow, on July 18, 1894. They had three children: Emma, Lewis and Minnie-Lee. The married names of the daughters are: Mollie—Mrs. James Bradley, Lizzie—Mrs. Alva Taylor, Emma—Mrs. C. A. Tharpe, and Minnie-Lee—Mrs. Paul Crater.

### HARRY LEE HIGEL

(Photograph on Page 185)

Harry Lee Higel was born in Philadelphia December 11, 1867, the son of Frank and Adelaide (Kirkoff) Higel. He was educated in the Philadelphia public schools and in 1884 came to the Land of Sarasota with the other members of the Higel family which settled at Venice.

For several years, Mr. Higel helped his father with his experiments in making starch from cassava roots and in making syrup and canned preserves. He also worked occasionally for the Knights (q.v.) who then controlled practically all the land in the Venice region.

Mr. Higel came to Sarasota soon after the town was founded and in the nineties he purchased the dock at the foot of Main Street built by the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co. and also the company's store. He also operated his boat "Nemo," conducted a general mercantile business, and handled land sales for J. Hamilton Gillespie when the latter was away from Sarasota.

After a channel was dredged through Sarasota Bay in 1895 and the steamer *Mistletoe* began making regular runs between here and Tampa, Mr. Higel acted as Sarasota agent for John Savarese, owner of the steamship line. He later bought and operated the steamer *Vandalia*. For a quarter century, he continued in the shipping business.

Mr. Higel was Sarasota's first retailer of gasoline and kerosene. He built tanks at the end of the pier and was the first local agent of the Gulf Refining Co. In 1899, he sold his store to George Cason and his stock of merchandise to Highsmith & Turner, then just established.

In 1907, Mr. Higel started the development of the north end of the Sarasota Key, which he named Siesta. The development project was retarded soon afterward by the national financial depression but it was resumed in 1911 on a much larger scale. (See Index: Siesta). Mr. Higel also built the Higelhurst Hotel at the entrance of Big Pass. The hotel was completely destroyed by fire March 31, 1917.

Soon after Mr. Higel began the Siesta development he led the movement to form the Sarasota Yacht Club (q.v.) and became its first commodore.

For more than a quarter century, Mr. Higel was one of Sarasota's most progressive citizens and he was a staunch supporter of every project designed to aid in the development of the community. He served five terms as member of the town and city council and three terms as mayor. His work for Sarasota can be gauged only by reading the full story of the development of the city, as given in the general text. At the time of his death, he was a director of the Bank of Sarasota and the Seaboard Railroad.

On January 18, 1896, Mr. Higel was married to Gertrude Edmondson, granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Whitaker, first settlers in the Land of Sarasota.

Mr. Higel died Thursday, January 6, 1921, and his body was buried in Rosemary Cemetery. He was survived by his widow and three children, Genevieve, Louise, and Harry Gordon; also, by his mother and five brothers, Frank, Ralph, Eugene, George and Wesley K.

### THE BROWNING FAMILY

Of all the Scotch colonists who came to settle in Sarasota on December 27, 1885, none remained to aid in the development of the town except members of the family of John B. and Jane Gault (Kerr) Browning, of Paisley, Scotland.



ALEX BROWNING

In Scotland, Mr. Browning had been the owner of a large lumber mill and woodworking shop. He was an expert craftsman, and when he arrived here he was kept busy erecting buildings for the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co. and its officials. Later he did general contracting and remained active until a short time before his death on April 24, 1913. Mrs. Browning died September 17, 1915. They lived for many years on Main Street, a short distance east of Pineapple.

Had it not been for Alex Browning, one of the sons of the Brownings, much interesting information regarding the colonists would have been forever lost. Before he died, he wrote his Memoirs which included invaluable data and human interest material which the author of this book drew upon heavily in writing the chapter pertaining to the colonists.

Alex Browning was born June 5, 1866, in Paisley. After being graduated from a college preparatory school, he studied architecture in the office of James Lindsay, in Edinburgh. Later, he was the winner of the Queen Victoria prize for the best draftsmanship in the British Isles and was presented an ivory handled drafting set by the Prince of Wales.

He was 19 years old when he arrived in Sarasota. Skilled in carpentry as well as in architecture, he aided his father on many projects and later drafted the plans for a number of Sarasota's first buildings. In 1890, he went to Tampa where he was an assistant architect on the Tampa Bay Hotel. After his work on the hotel was finished in 1891, he remained in Tampa working as a contractor. There he met and married Annie Marron, in 1893.

During the next five years, Mr. Browning built the Coe block and other buildings in Bradenton, Palmetto and Ellenton. In 1899, he went to Cuba where he was employed by the United States government supervising reconstruction work in Cuba.

After his work in Cuba was finished, Mr. Browning went north and supervised the construction of large buildings in Chicago, Buffalo, Toronto, Ont., and Hamilton, Ont. During World War I he worked on plans for the Dominion of Canada Shipbuilding Co.

Later in 1919, he returned to Sarasota with the intention of retiring. Instead, he was appointed commissioner of public works. Later, he drew the plans and his son, Hugh Browning, III, did the contracting for many buildings, including the Frances-Carlton Apartments, The Lodge, and numerous private homes. He died on September 14, 1932. His wife died on June 5, 1938.

Mr. and Mrs. Alex Browning had four children: John Bowie, born in Bradenton, March 5, 1898; Helen, who became the wife of Dr. W. J. Johnston; Alex, who died in Toronto, and Hugh K., who died in Sarasota.

John Bowie Browning was educated in Toronto and in 1917 joined the Royal Flying Corps. In the spring of 1918 he was transferred to the Royal Air Corps and made an instructor. He went overseas in October, 1918, and served a year. He then came to

Sarasota and was associated with his father in the contracting business. In 1924, he went into the real estate business. In 1929, he was employed by the Sarasota Herald, first as circulation manager and later as advertising manager. In 1937, he left the Herald to publish a weekly, "The News Advertiser," which he later sold to a partner, A. J. Saul. In 1939, he was employed by Radio Station WSPB as salesman and in 1942 was made manager and vice-president.

On April 14, 1925, he was married to Gertrude W. Berry, of Gray, Me. Mr. and Mrs. Browning have three children: Alex, John, Jr., and Helen. He served as a member of the city council from 1941 to 1945 and is a member of the American Legion, Kiwanis Club, Elks, and Sarasota Park Board. He is also a member of St. Martha's Catholic Church.

Flight Sergeant Hugh Browning Johnston, son of Dr. and Mrs. Johnston, was the first Sarasota boy to be killed in World War II. He left his class in Sarasota High School in February, 1940, to join the R.C.A.F., and, after becoming trained as an air gunner, he was sent to England in March, 1941. He went on many bombing raids over Germany and was killed November 25, 1941, twenty days after being transferred to the Suez theatre of operations.

Hugh K. Browning, brother of Alex, served several years as a member of the city council. He was engaged as a contractor here for many years and had a home on the waterfront, just south of the Belle Haven Inn. He died in Trenton, N. J., in 1938. Mrs. Ewina Browning Hollowell, of St. Andrews Bay, Fla., is now the only one of the original Scotch colonists still living.

## JOHN HAMILTON GILLESPIE

(*Photograph on Page 108*)

John Hamilton Gillespie, Sarasota's No. 1 citizen for over two decades and one of the pioneer golfers in America, was born in Maffat, Dumfriesshire, Scotland, in 1852, the son of Sir John Gillespie, head of the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co. (q.v.).

He studied law in Edinburgh and became a member of the Royal Company of Archers, Queen's Bodyguard for Scotland. He later went to Australia with the Midlothian Artillery Brigade of Volunteers. On his return to Scotland, he got married and was sent to Sarasota to represent his father's company, arriving in the spring of 1886, after practically all the Scotch colonists had left. (See General Text).

Mr. Gillespie dominated Sarasota for many years, partly because of his vibrant personality and partly because the company he represented owned practically all the original town site, as well as approximately 50,000 acres adjoining. He was the only attorney and real estate agent in the community until after 1900, he served many times as justice of the peace, he was one of the founders of the short-lived "Slow and Wobbly" railroad (q.v.), he helped to get an appropriation from the federal government for the first dredging in Sarasota Bay in 1893-95, he built the De Soto Hotel (later named the Bellen Haven Inn), and

after Sarasota was incorporated as a town on October 14, 1902, he served six one-year terms as mayor and one term as councilman. All this, and much, much more, as has been related in the Story of Sarasota.

Mr. Gillespie has been widely credited for having laid out the first golf course in the United States, here in Sarasota. That is a debatable point but there is no question but that he had a two-hole practice course here in the late spring of 1886, located in a clearing where the Central School later was built. In 1887, when he built his home about where the Mira Mar Auditorium is now located, he laid out another practice course. In 1905, he laid out a nine-hole course east of Link Street which he maintained until 1910 when he sold most of his real estate holdings to Owen Burns.

During the Nineties, Mr. Gillespie laid out golf courses in Jacksonville, Kissimmee, Tampa, Bellair, and Havana, Cuba. He is credited with having sold Henry B. Plant, famous West Coast railroad builder, the idea of popularizing golf throughout Florida as a means to attract tourists.

Mr. Gillespie returned to Scotland May 7, 1914, and soon after his arrival there he became a captain in the national guard which was broken up when the British army was mobilized. He was later given command of a volunteer training corps and still later trained a cadet corps. He returned to Sarasota in June, 1919.

Mr. Gillespie was married twice. His first wife died in Scotland in 1901 and four years later he married Blanche McDaniel, daughter of R. P. McDaniel.

Mr. Gillespie suffered a heart attack on September 7, 1923, while walking on a golf course he had founded and he died soon afterward. His body was buried in Rosemary Cemetery, which he deeded to Sarasota in 1903.

### JOSEPH H. LORD

Joseph H. Lord, for many years the largest property owner in what is now Sarasota County, was born December 8, 1859, at Wells Depot, Me. He was graduated from Brown University, at Providence, R. I., with an A.B. degree in 1885. He was married to Franc Mabel Webber, a graduate of Boston University.

In the fall of 1885, Mr. Lord came to Florida, primarily for his health and secondarily to prospect for promising phosphate lands. On May 20, 1886, he was admitted to the Florida state bar and began practicing in Orlando.

After traveling in all parts of peninsular Florida, Mr. Lord came to the Sarasota Bay region in 1889. During the following 20 years, he acquired a total of more than 100,000 acres, paying from 75 cents to \$4 an acre. His holdings included practically all the undeveloped virgin land from Sarasota to Venice and east to the Myakka River. He started large orange groves at Venice and Bee Ridge and developed Florence, a few miles south of Sarasota on little Sarasota Bay.



JOSEPH H. LORD

Mr. Lord began making extensive purchases in the town of Sarasota after it was learned the Seaboard intended to build a branch road here. By 1906 he owned four of the five corners at Five Points as well as scores of other business and residential lots. Included in his purchases was the Sarasota House (q.v.) which he owned until it was razed in 1924 to provide a site for a building for the First Bank & Trust Co., of which he was president, and Lord's Arcade. The bank building is now known as the Palmer Bank Building.

To Mr. Lord goes the credit for having induced Mrs. Potter Palmer to come to Sarasota for the first time, in February, 1910. Mr. Lord's son, J. H. Lord, Jr., states that Mrs. Palmer purchased nearly a million dollars worth of land from his father during the next few years.

Mr. Lord became the vice-president and manager of the Sarasota-Venice Co., organized to sell the property which he and Mrs. Palmer owned. This company started the Bee Ridge development and conducted a nation-wide advertising campaign which attracted many new settlers to this region.

The wide range of Mr. Lord's activities is covered in the general text. (See Index: Lord, J. H.).

For many years he was one of the key figures in the Board of Trade and, later, of the Chamber of Commerce. He was, in actuality, a one-man Board

of Trade during the years when Sarasota first began to emerge from the fishing village stage. From 1910 until February 12, 1914, he maintained his headquarters in Chicago, handling sales for the Sarasota-Venice Co. He then returned to Sarasota where he remained until 1930. He died in Chicago on December 24, 1936. Mrs. Lord died there May 31, 1936. Their bodies are buried in the Manasota Burial Park.

### C. WOODBURN MATHENY

C. Woodburn Matheny was born in St. Paul, Minn., March 22, 1884, the son of Mr. and Mrs. George H. Matheny. His father was a native of Springfield, Ill., and his mother, Ella, a native of St. Louis, Mo.

In the fall of 1892, the family came to Florida and arrived in Osprey October 20. The Mathenys spent the winter at John G. Webb's Winter Resort. In the spring they chartered Frank Blackburn's sloop and cruised along the coast for two months before returning to St. Paul.

They vacationed here again the following winter and then in 1894 purchased the Eloy Peterson homestead on Little Sarasota Bay. They built a new home which they called "Willow Oaks" and developed a citrus grove. Mrs. Matheny lived there until she died in May, 1905, and George H. Matheny until he died in 1917.

C. Woodburn Matheny was associated with his father in dredging and developing projects for many years. They built the first commercial dredge used in this section. Following his father's death he was engaged in the dredging, seawall construction, barging, and sand and shell business until the beginning of World War II. He served as a member of the county school board for 10 years.

On October 1, 1912, Mr. Matheny was married to Virginia Yates of Springfield, Ill. Mr. and Mrs. Matheny have four children: Charles W. Jr., a lieutenant colonel in World War II; Elizabeth Y., Ft. Sill, Okla.; Randolph Y., an attorney in Orlando, and Eston G., a First Lieutenant in the army in World War II.

### BENJAMIN F. STICKNEY

Benjamin F. Stickney, in whose honor Stickney Point Bridge was named, was born January 17, 1842, in St. Louis. After being engaged in mining and the hotel business for many years, he came to Sarasota in 1894 and was proprietor of the old De Soto Hotel for a year. He then retired and homesteaded on Sarasota Key, one of the first settlers on the key. He was known to everyone in this region as "Uncle Ben." He died in his home on the key February 10, 1912. Wrote George "Nemo" Higley in the Sarasota Times: "The grand old oaks, like green sentinels, will guard the spot he loved so well."

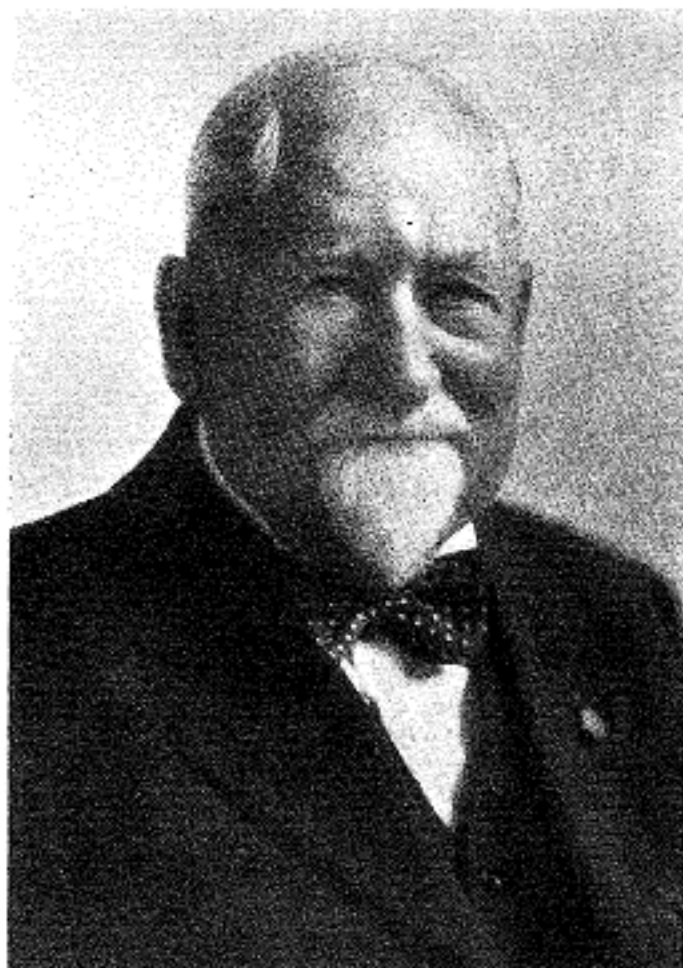
### LUKE A. WOOD

Luke A. Wood was born in Woonsocket, R. I., February 23, 1843, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas J. Wood, descendants of old New England families. Mr. Wood inherited a large farm near Woonsocket which had been owned by his family for generations and he operated it more than twenty-five years.

On April 5, 1866, Mr. Wood was married to Annie S. James, of Hannibal, Mo. Early in the Nineties, Mrs. Wood's health began to fail and the family physician advised her to go to a place which had a milder climate.

Mr. and Mrs. Wood came to Florida for the first time in 1892 and spent most of several winters in Palmetto and Bradenton. In March, 1896, after traveling widely over the state they visited Sarasota and during the next month, Mr. Wood purchased the 70-acre homestead of Alfred B. Bidwell as a 30-year wedding anniversary present for his wife, who had selected the place as the most desirable in Florida.

The home on the Bidwell property, which was uncompleted when the Woods bought the homestead, is the oldest in the city limits of Sarasota and one of the most historic. Bidwell was a leader of the Sara Sota Vigilantes Committee (q.v.) and on Christmas day, 1884, while a house warming party was being held at his place, the Vigilantes met in his old



LUKE A. WOOD

house, adjoining, and planned the murder of Postmaster Charles E. Abbe.

After Bidwell's conviction and trial, the house was abandoned for a number of years. The Woods finished building it and moved into it during the winter of 1896-97. Close to the house is a rippling creek, running through a ravine, the banks of which were densely covered with semi-tropical trees. Mr. and Mrs. Wood developed the ravine into one of the most beautiful spots in Sarasota.

Throughout his adult life, Mr. Wood was an active member of the Masonic Lodge and when he came to Florida was deputy grand master of Morning Star Lodge, of Woonsocket, R. I. On December 17, 1931, when special ceremonies were held in the lodge at Woonsocket to present 50-year membership jewels to old members, a special telephone connection was made to the Wood home here so his voice could be heard over a loud speaker in the lodge rooms. The occurrence was so unique that Knights Templar of Sarasota went to Mr. Wood's home in a body to participate in the event.

Twelve acres of the Wood property, extending from Osprey Avenue east to the Tamiami Trail, were turned over to the city on December 30, 1931. The tract was converted into a park and named Luke Wood Park in honor of Mr. Wood. The fertile land was beautified by the Garden Club and a fountain and statuary were placed in it as a memorial to Mrs. Mable Ringling, one of the club's founders and president of the Founders Circle.

Mrs. Wood died in Onset, Mass., July 31, 1924, and Mr. Wood in Sarasota February 8, 1933. Their children who are surviving in 1946 are: Mrs. Nellie Wood Fairchild, of Fort Collins, Col.; Charles B. Wood, of Denver, Col.; Ethel Wood, of Sarasota, and Luke A. Wood, Jr., of Brighton, Mass.

Miss Wood came here first with her parents in 1896 and has returned every winter since. And ever since 1896 she has lived in the same house—a half century of winter residency which undoubtedly places her at the top of Sarasota's winter visitors' list.

Miss Wood, who spends her summers on Cape Cod, at Onset, Mass., has been associated with Mrs. Daisy E. Williams in the real estate business since 1934.

#### CORNELIUS VAN SANTVOORD WILSON

Cornelius Van Santvoord Wilson was born at Mohawk, N. Y., July 10, 1837. On September 28, 1865, he married Miss Harriet Angelina Hunter, of Schenectady, N. Y., and soon after moved to Madison, Ga. A few years later he moved to Longwood, Fla., where he purchased the Longwood News.

In 1885, he moved his family to Manatee where he established the Manatee County Advocate. During the yellow fever epidemic in Manatee in 1887, Mrs. Wilson died, leaving six children. A year later, the oldest son, Arthur, died.

On March 8, 1898, Mr. Wilson was married to Miss Rose Phillips whose parents, formerly of Glas-

cow, Scotland, had moved from Canada to Florida a few years before.

Mr. Wilson discontinued publication of the Advocate in May, 1899, and moved his plant to Sarasota and on June 1 established the Sarasota Times. During the years which followed, he took an active interest in everything pertaining to the welfare of Sarasota. He was a charter member of Sarasota Lodge No. 147, F. & A.M., an elder in the First Presbyterian Church, and for several years served as justice of the peace for Sarasota district. He died September 28, 1910, after a long illness.

Mrs. Wilson continued publication of the Times until 1923 when she sold the business. She has since made her home in Sarasota.

For many years, Mr. Wilson's sons were in the newspaper business on the Florida East Coast. Harry, who was associated with the Titusville Advocate, died in Titusville in 1938. A. K. Wilson, who established the Fort Pierce Tribune, died in Miami in 1944.

Surviving in 1946 are three daughters: Mrs. W. V. Curry, Bradenton; Mrs. W. S. Clark, Manatee, and Mrs. W. H. Jones, Tampa; also twelve grandchildren, seventeen great grandchildren, and four great great grandchildren.

#### RALPH C. CAPLES

Ralph C. Caples was born in Fostoria, Ohio, December 23, 1872, the son of Dr. Robert Cole and Mary Elizabeth (Barber) Caples. He studied at Oberlin College, Northwestern University, and at Princeton, where one of his professors was Woodrow Wilson.

While attending college, Mr. Caples got his first job as a yard clerk of the Lake Erie & Western Railroad in Fostoria. After leaving college, he became successively traveling passenger agent of the Mobile & Ohio, city passenger agent of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western, at Norfolk, general passenger agent of the Detroit & Lima Northern, and traffic manager of the National Steel & Wire Co.

He joined the New York Central in 1905 and became general agent of the railroad, being the right hand man of Vice-president Charles F. Daly of that system. When he left the railroad in 1913, two hundred railroad men gave him a farewell dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. He then became general traffic manager of the Western Maryland Railway Co. In July, 1916, he resigned to become confidential representative of John N. Willys, president of the Willys-Overland Automobile Co., which during World War I manufactured Liberty motors.

During the presidential campaign in 1920, Mr. Caples had charge of Warren G. Harding's train and after Mr. Harding was elected, Mr. Caples was offered the position of manager of the Alaskan railroads, which he refused.

Mr. Caples was married on September 15, 1898, to Ellen Fletcher, daughter of John B. and Mary Fletcher, of Kenton, O. Mr. and Mrs. Caples visited Sarasota for the first time late in 1899 on a delayed honeymoon trip and while here he conceived the



RALPH C. CAPLES

idea of building a railroad to link Sarasota with Tampa. He then organized the Florida West Coast Railroad Co. (q.v.) but before he could get started laying tracks, the Seaboard "beat him to it," as Mr. Caples says, and built a branch line here five years earlier than the railroad's officials had planned.

Mr. and Mrs. Caples visited Sarasota frequently during the years which followed and on July 20, 1909, purchased the W. H. English home at Shell Beach. They have been winter residents here ever since.

When the Caples first moved to Shell Beach, the woods trails were almost impassable because of the clutching sand and in order to drive a team to town, Mr. Caples had men cut thousands of palmetto fronds and lay them in the ruts.

In the fall of 1911, Mr. Caples bought the home of Charles N. Thompson, and a large adjoining tract of land, and induced John and Charles Ringling to make Sarasota their winter homes. John Ringling bought the Thompson home and a large tract from Caples on January 31, 1912, and Charles Ringling bought nearby soon afterward.

In September, 1912, Mr. Caples and John F. Burket purchased the Belle Haven Inn from the Southern Investment Co. Soon afterward, Mr. Caples also bought 55 city lots and large tracts from the same com-

pany. In the summer of 1913, he built the Caples building on Main Street.

A perennial booster for Sarasota, Mr. Caples has lauded the city throughout the land, has brought many celebrities here, and has induced scores of them to become winter residents. He was one of the original directors of the Mira Mar Hotel Co. and has been affiliated actively with scores of other projects designed to advance the city.

In 1921, Mr. Caples went into the advertising business, with offices in Chicago. His concern now has offices in New York, Chicago, Omaha, and Los Angeles. It specializes in the handling of the accounts of large railroads.

Mr. Caples is a member of the Union League of New York, the Union League of Chicago, the Princeton Club of New York, Bankers Club of New York, Recess Club of New York, the Nassau Club of Princeton, the Elks, and is a life member of the Kiwanis Club and the Ohio Society of New York. For years he has been an active supporter of the Salvation Army.

Mrs. Caples, who was a soloist for years of the First Presbyterian Church of New York, has been active in church work and social affairs in Sarasota for many years.

#### GEORGE B. PRIME

George B. Prime was born in Albert Lea, Minn., on December 12, 1880 and came to Florida with his parents in 1886. On the morning after their arrival Florida experienced the worst freeze in its history and young George Prime was able to make snowballs from snow which had collected on the door step of their home in Bradenton.

Mr. Prime attended public schools in Bradenton and later went to Rollins College, in Winter Park. On September 13, 1899, he was married to Kate Blount of Bartow. Mr. and Mrs. Prime moved to Sarasota in the fall of 1900 and he went into the general mercantile business with S. H. Highsmith and J. B. Turner. In 1902 he sold his interest in the store to E. F. Blakeley and operated a schooner along the coast. In 1909 he joined with Highsmith in establishing a grocery and hardware store. Mr. Prime remained in the hardware business in Sarasota until 1938 when he moved to Clayton, Ga. (See Index: Prime, George B.)

During the Roaring Twenties he operated extensively in real estate with Frank Dillinger under the firm name of Dillinger and Prime. He was a director of the Bank of Sarasota, First Bank & Trust Co., Trust Company of Sarasota and American Mortgage and Guarantee Co. He served two terms on the city council and was a member of the board of county commissioners from 1922-26. He was a member of the Masonic lodge, Egypt Temple Shrine, and the Elks lodge.

Mr. Prime was one of the original advocates of the Tamiami Trail and with 20 other men took part in the "trail blazing" trip across the state in April



GEORGE B. PRIME

1923, demonstrating that the route was feasible. (See Index: Tamiami Trail).

Like her husband, Mrs. Prime was active in all civic organizations formed to aid in the development of the city. She was particularly active in the Sarasota County Welfare Association, which she helped to found, and it was largely because of her efforts that the association finally succeeded in obtaining a hospital for Sarasota.

Mr. and Mrs. Prime had five children: Anne, born July 25, 1901; Katherine, born September 13, 1903, the wife of W. G. Shepard; George B., born September 26, 1905; Rose B., born February 9, 1912, wife of R. J. Freeman, and Alice Elizabeth, born November 24, 1918, now laboratory technician for Gorgas Hospital, Panama Canal Zone.

### JUDGE PAUL C. ALBRITTON

Judge Paul C. Albritton was born July 25, 1896, in Polk County, Florida, the son of Thomas A. and Martha Jane (Chancey) Albritton, descendants of pioneer Florida families.

Thomas A. Albritton was a citrus grower and in 1900 he came here with his family and bought the old Sebon Rawls grove at Bee Ridge. He has been engaged in the citrus industry ever since.

Paul Albritton attended the county school at Bee Ridge and was graduated from Sarasota High School in 1915 in the school's second graduating class, in which there were three boys and five girls. He then entered John B. Stetson University, at Deland, Fla., where he studied until he enlisted in the navy in June, 1917. For training, he was sent to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Wingfoot Lake lighter-than-air training camp, at Akron, O. In May, 1918, he was commissioned at Pensacola, Fla., where he served as flight instructor until May, 1919.

In the autumn of 1919, he returned to Stetson where he was graduated with an A.B. degree in 1920. He then entered the law school at Stetson and was graduated in June, 1922. Immediately admitted to the state and federal bar, he began practicing here during the summer of 1922. In 1923, he was appointed county attorney and served nearly a year.

He was married to Miss Emma Jane Rowe, of Miami, on January 24, 1924.

On May 20, 1924, he was appointed county judge by the governor to succeed Judge W. Y. Perry, who had died in office. On June 20, 1927, he was appointed circuit judge, becoming the youngest circuit judge in Florida. He served until August 1, 1935, when he resumed the practice of law. He died February 18, 1946. Myakka State Park, which he helped create, is one of the achievements of this progressive citizen.



PAUL C. ALBRITTON

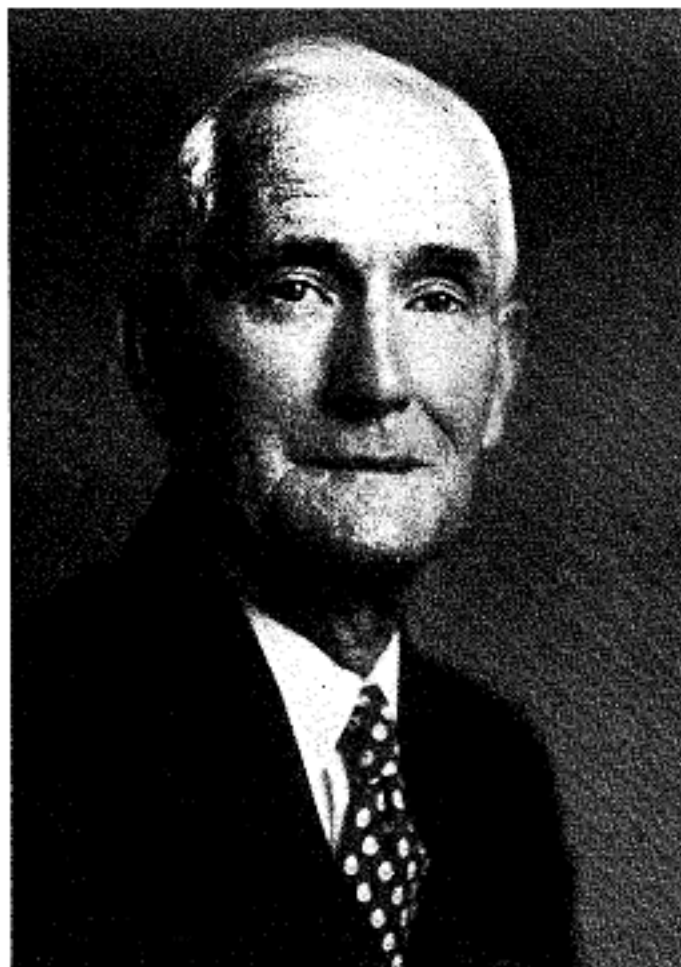
Judge Albritton was a Mason, Shriner, charter member and past commander of Sarasota Bay Post American Legion, an Elk, past president of the Kiwanis Club, and a communicant at the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer.

He was survived by his widow, two sons, Pfc. Thomas James Albritton, who had just returned from service in China, and Charles Richard Albritton, who had recently volunteered in the navy; his father and mother; a brother, Karl, and a sister, Maude Albritton. Thomas James Albritton was born June 19, 1925, and his brother, Charles Richard, on March 17, 1928.

### HAMDEN SIDNEY SMITH

Hamden Sidney Smith was born in Owensboro, Ky., February 21, 1869, the son of William T. and Mary E. (Sidney) Smith. He attended the Owensboro public schools until 1884 when his health became so bad that the family physician said he would not live more than a year or two.

Believing that their son's health would improve in a milder climate, Mr. Smith's parents came to Florida and bought an orange grove at Anthony, eight miles from Ocala. Within a year, he was well and strong again. When 18, he started working in the depot at



HAMDEN SIDNEY SMITH

Anthony for \$15 a month; two years later he was made agent.

In 1903, he was sent to Sarasota to become the first agent of the Seaboard. He arrived on the second train which came into the town, on March 23. (See Index: Seaboard). In 1905, he started a general store and later became associated with Highsmith, Turner & Co. While in the merchandizing business, he "imported" the town's first milliner, Miss Mary Manning, of Baltimore, who later was married to Fred Knight, pioneer druggist.

In 1908, Mr. Smith was persuaded to become manager of the Belle Haven Inn, which had become badly run down. He renovated it and succeeded in making it a popular resort. He then went with the Sarasota Ice & Electric Co. as manager and later entered the real estate business.

Mr. Smith was elected mayor on October 10, 1910, and served a year. While he was in office, Sarasota got its first water system and the first sewers were laid. (See General Text). He was active in the Chamber of Commerce from its beginning and was president of the organization in 1921 when Sarasota County was created.

On April 16, 1896, Mr. Smith was married to Adelia N. Swain, whose grandfather, Edwin Anthony, had founded the town of Anthony. Mrs. Smith died June 10, 1942. Earlier, Mr. Smith had named Adelia Avenue in his wife's honor.

Mr. and Mrs. Smith had four children: Emma Gene, now the wife of Claude I. Hebb, of Manatee; Henderson Sidney Smith, of Atlanta, Ga.; Virginia W. Smith, of Detroit, and Ralph Anthony Smith, of Detroit.

### DR. JACK HALTON

Dr. Jack Halton was born in St. Helens, Lancashire, England, March 3, 1868, the son of Henry and Mary (Everson) Halton. When 14 years old, he became a midshipman in the British navy and remained in the service until 1890 when he came to the United States. Soon afterward he enrolled in the Miami Medical College of the University of Cincinnati and later practiced in Cincinnati and Muncie, Ind.

Dr. Halton first visited Sarasota in the fall of 1904 and moved here in 1905, opening an office at the foot of Main Street. In March, 1908, he opened the Halton Sanitarium (q.v.). He also managed the Belle Haven Inn for three years. He served one term as councilman and two years as city physician. For many years he was a surgeon for the Seaboard Airline Railroad. He organized the department of proctology in the Tampa Municipal Hospital and was a staff member of St. Joseph's Hospital, Tampa, and the Sarasota Hospital.

He was commissioned as a captain in the Army Medical Corps in August, 1917, and served until September, 1919, at Camp Sevier, Greenville, S. C., and later with the U. S. Public Health Service in Greenville.



DR. JACK HALTON

In 1932, he received the American Legion community service award in recognition of the work he had done for the Legion's underprivileged children's clinic. Later, he practiced in Tampa and Jacksonville and returned here in 1936.

On May 28, 1902, Dr. Halton was married to Edna Swain, of Muncie, Ind. Both Dr. Halton and his wife were gifted with fine voices and for many years they were prominent in Sarasota musical, social and church affairs. They had two children: Dorothy, now the wife of Ed Roth, and Jack Anthony, who served three years as a lieutenant in the Navy during World War II. By a previous marriage, he had a daughter, Edith, now anethetist of the Tampa Municipal Hospital.

Dr. Halton died February 27, 1942, of heart failure, while singing at a convention in St. Petersburg. He was survived by his widow, Mrs. Winifred (Caddwell) Halton; his son, Jack; three daughters, Edith, Mrs. Roth and Mrs. Ned Roberts; a sister, Mrs. Homer Welch, and three brothers, William, of Wood River, Ill., and James and Dr. Joseph Halton of Sarasota.

Dr. Joseph Halton came here several years after his brother had become established, and started practicing. He is the owner of Halton Hospital, a private institution. His wife, Mary Colt Halton, has been active in social and musical circles. He served one term as councilman in 1910-11.

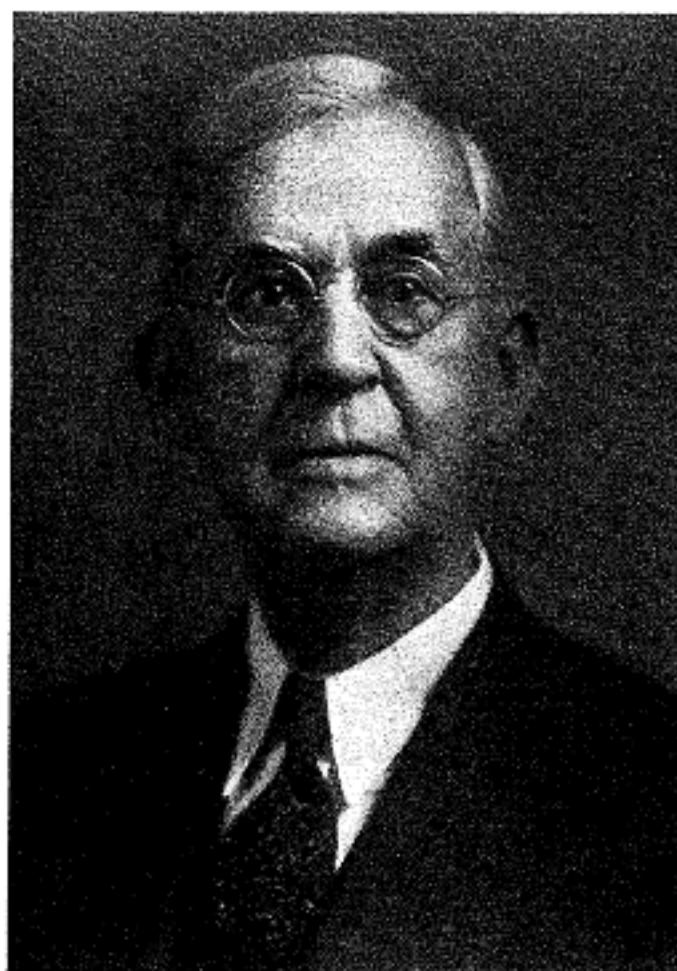
James Halton, who is engaged in the gasoline business, was married in Sarasota to Corrine Noble. They have a son, Harry, who is now a chiropodist, practicing in Denver. By a previous marriage he had a son, Richard E., who also is a chiropodist, practicing in Sarasota.

### THOMAS WAYLAND YARBROUGH

Thomas Wayland Yarbrough, head of Sarasota public schools for 33 years, was born in Oxford, Georgia, September 16, 1869, the son of George Wesley and Mary Boyce (Morris) Yarbrough. Both his father and grandfather, John Wesley Yarbrough, were Methodist ministers.

Mr. Yarbrough was a graduate of Emory College and later attended the University of Florida. He began his teaching career in the public schools of Georgia. He then taught in Alabama and Louisiana until 1905 when he came to Florida to become principal of Bethel High School. In 1907 he came to Manatee County, of which the present Sarasota County was then a part, and was made principal of the Sarasota public schools.

He held that position until 1918 when he went to Mulberry where he remained until 1921. He was then appointed superintendent of public instruction in the newly-created Sarasota County. He was re-



THOMAS WAYLAND YARBROUGH

elected repeatedly to the position and served until he retired at the end of 1944. He died February 26, 1946.

Mr. Yarbrough probably was known to more Sarasotans than any other person. During the entire time he headed the schools he personally handed out diplomas to every graduate of Sarasota High School at commencement exercises.

On August 30, 1906, Mr. Yarbrough was married to Margaret Turnbull, of Monticello, Fla., who died September 16, 1925. On January 19, 1929, he was married to Sue Jeanette Hailey, of Hartwell, Ga. He was survived by his widow; three children, Thomas Wayland, Jr., Katherine Hailey, and George; three brothers, Dr. Harris Yarbrough, Milledgeville, Ga., Haygood Yarbrough, Huntington, W. Va., and the Rev. John Yarbrough, Covington, Ga.

### CLYDE H. WILSON

Clyde H. Wilson was born in Sarasota February 17, 1908, the son of Dr. Cullen B. and Frances (Reaves) Wilson (q.v.).

After being graduated from Sarasota high school, he attended Washington & Lee University and the University of Florida Law School, from which he was graduated with an L.L.B. degree in 1934. Since then he has practiced law in Sarasota.



CLYDE H. WILSON

In 1938, he was elected state attorney of the 12th Judicial Circuit comprising Sarasota, Manatee, DeSoto, Charlotte, Lee, Glades and Collier counties. He was re-elected in 1942. Since he took office, more than a thousand criminal prosecutions have been instituted by Mr. Wilson. Many of the cases have attracted statewide attention.

He is a member of the Methodist church, Masonic lodge, Lions Club, Junior Chamber of Commerce, and the Florida and American bar associations.

On June 22, 1934, Mr. Wilson was married to Pauline Ellis. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson have two children: Paula Cullen, born December 27, 1937, and Clyde H., Jr., born January 31, 1940.

### MRS. POTTER PALMER

(Portrait on Page 158)

Mrs. Potter Palmer, nee Bertha Honore, was born in Louisville, Ky., May 22, 1849, the daughter of Henry Hamilton and Eliza (Carr) Honore. Her father was a descendent of Jean Antoine Honore, a member of an old French family, who was born in Paris, October 6, 1758, and died in Louisville, July 13, 1843, having come to America in 1782, settling first at Baltimore. He moved to Louisville in 1806 and was the owner of the first steamboat to ply between Louisville and New Orleans.

She was graduated from the Convent of the Visitation, at Georgetown, District of Columbia, and soon afterwards, in 1871, was married to Potter Palmer, one of the largest property owners in Chicago and later owner of the world famous Palmer House.

In 1891, Mrs. Palmer was elected president of the Board of Lady Managers of the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 and visited Europe to interest foreign governments in the exposition.

As a result of the efforts of her board, there was built on the fair grounds a woman's building in which were exhibited examples of women's art and handicrafts from all parts of the world. In 1900 Mrs. Palmer was appointed by President William McKinley as the only woman member of the national commission to represent the United States at the Paris Exposition and was awarded the decoration of the Legion d'Honneur by the French government.

In the social life of her day, Mrs. Palmer long held a position of leadership. For a number of years she maintained homes in London and Paris where she was well known. The King of England was a frequent guest at her London home. Mrs. Palmer joined her noted husband in many of his works for the public good and her personal charities were broad and far reaching.

Mrs. Palmer was noted, not only for her unusual grace of manner and social attainments but as a business woman of the highest order. She was quick to grasp the possibilities of an opportunity and was capable as a developer of her plans. At the death of her husband on May 4, 1902, Mrs. Palmer came into a fortune of approximately \$8,000,000. By her cap-

able and far sighted management this fortune was increased until at the time of her death May 5, 1918, it was estimated as aggregating more than \$20,000,000.

Mrs. Palmer first became interested in the Sarasota region in 1910 when, accompanied by her father, brother, and two sons, Honore and Potter Palmer, Jr., she came here to look over land which had been advertised in Chicago newspapers by Lord & Edwards. She immediately fell in love with the country and purchased the site on which she at once began the erection of her beautiful home, "The Oaks," on Little Sarasota Bay.

Possessed of an active and energetic nature, she took an aggressive part in the development of the region and at the time of her death owned or controlled more than 80,000 acres in Sarasota and Hillsborough Counties. Most notable among her development projects were the large cattle ranch in the Myakka section, known as "Meadow Sweet Pastures"; the Bee Ridge development, which she planned to make one of the best produce and citrus growing sections of the state, and the development of the Venice region, where she had made plans for the establishment of a winter colony on what she referred to as "the most beautiful bay in the world."

Mrs. Palmer died at "The Oaks" after a short illness. Upon learning of her death, Mayor G. W. Franklin lowered the city flag to half mast as a tribute of respect and the city council passed a resolution expressing the sorrow of the entire community. Her body was interred in the family vault in Chicago. She was survived by her two sons, six grandchildren, two brothers, A. C. and Nathaniel Honore; her sister, Mrs. Frederick Dent Grant; her niece, Princess Cantacuzene, and her nephew, General U. S. Grant, 3rd.

Her son, Potter Palmer, Jr., who died September 6, 1942, was survived by two sons, Potter Palmer III and Gordon Palmer, both of whom served as lieutenant commanders in the USNR during World War II, and two daughters, Bertha, the wife of Oakleigh Thorne II, of New York, and Pauline, the wife of Arthur McDougal Wood, of Chicago.

### HONORE PALMER

Honore Palmer was born in Chicago, February 1, 1874, the son of Potter and Bertha (Honore) Palmer. After a preparatory education at St. Mark's School, he was graduated in 1898 from Harvard University with a degree of Bachelor of Arts. In 1898 and 1899 he traveled abroad and upon his return home entered his father's office.

After his father's death on May 4, 1902, Honore Palmer became an executive of the Palmer estate. Since then he has devoted himself principally to the administration and development of projects with which his father and, later, his mother, were so extensively concerned. He was elected to the Chicago Board of Aldermen from the 21st Ward in 1901 and was re-elected in 1903, both times on the Democratic ticket, in a largely Republican ward.



HONORE PALMER

Mr. Palmer came to Sarasota first in the winter of 1910 and has been coming here every winter since. In 1911, he and his brother, Potter Palmer, Jr., built their home "Immokalee" on a 140-acre tract formerly known as the old Peck place. Later, Honore Palmer acquired his brother's interest in this and, after their mother's death, Potter Palmer, Jr., made his winter home at "The Oaks."

Honore Palmer served as one of the first officials of the Sarasota-Venice Co., formed to develop the extensive Palmer holdings. In 1922 he and his brother made the first plantings in what is now known as the Hyde Park Citrus Groves. At present, the groves cover 1,200 acres and produce more citrus fruit than any other grove in this section of Florida.

In 1923 Mr. Palmer and his brother aided in the formation of the Sarasota-Fruitville drainage district near Fruitville under state law and district operations in which more than 8000 acres were made available for cultivation. In this project Mr. Palmer and his brother acted as trustees of their mother's estate, and the land became known as the Palmer Farms. Since the land was drained a large part of it has been sold to private individuals who are now members of the Palmer Farms Growers Association, a co-operative organization which runs a large celery packing and washing plant, prepares the celery for shipping, and markets it in the north. During the season of 1944-

45 a total of 622,288 crates of celery were shipped by the association as well as large quantities of other truck produce.

Mr. Palmer is chairman of the board of the Palmer National Bank & Trust Co. (q.v.), and is the active head of the Palmer Florida Corp., and other Palmer organizations. A retiring man, Mr. Palmer seldom appears in the limelight but he is the directing force which has caused the Palmer organizations to be potent factors in the development of Sarasota and Sarasota County.

Development of Myakka State Park (q.v.) was made possible by the outright gift, in October, 1934, of a strategic tract of 1920 acres to the state by Honore and Potter Palmer, Jr. This particular tract lies on both sides of the Sugar Bowl Road as it crosses the Myakka Valley between Upper and Lower lakes and is known as "the old picnic grounds." It was conveyed to the trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund to be used solely for park purposes.

Mr. Palmer was married in 1903 in London, England, to Grace Greenway Brown, of Baltimore, Md. Mr. and Mrs. Palmer had two sons: Potter D'Orsay, born in 1905, and Honore Jr., born in 1908. The former died in 1939 and the latter in 1938.

### OWEN BURNS

Owen Burns was born in Fredericktown, Md., October 31, 1869, the son of Owen and Martha Ann (Armstrong) Burns. His grandfather, Capt. Otway Burns, was famed for his exploits during the war of 1812. The U. S. Destroyer Otway Burns was named in his honor.

Owen Burns was educated in the public schools of Fredericktown, and later studied at Baltimore City College, in Baltimore. After leaving school he was associated with his brother, I. R. Burns, in California for about a year. He then returned to the mid-west and, during the years which followed, made a fortune through the marketing of metal home savings banks which were sold to banks throughout the country. His offices were in Chicago.

Mr. Burns was an ardent hunter and fisherman and it was his interest in fishing which first brought him to Sarasota in the spring of 1910. He liked the town so well that he decided to make it his permanent home. He invested heavily in property, buying all the holdings of J. Hamilton Gillespie and the Florida Mortgage and Investment Co., thereby becoming the largest land owner in Sarasota. (See Index: Burns, Owen).

Within a few months he began to take an active part in civic affairs. In March, 1911, Mr. Burns organized and became first president of the Citizens Bank of Sarasota, which later became the First National Bank. In November, 1911, he was elected president of the Board of Trade. He soon afterward played a leading part in the reorganization of the Sarasota Yacht Club. He was also instrumental in establishing the golf club. He aided in establishing the Woman's Club and in



OWEN BURNS

building St. Martha's Church. He was a member of various civic organizations and was a 32nd degree Mason. In 1926 Mr. Burns built the El Vernona Hotel. (q.v.).

On June 4, 1912, Mr. Burns was married to Vernona Hill Freeman of Whitman, Mass. Mr. Burns died in Sarasota, August 28, 1937. He was survived by his widow and five children: Lillian Grant Burns, Owen Burns, Jr., Leonard Hill Burns, Vernona Burns and Harriet Packard Burns.

### EVERETT J. BACON

Everett J. Bacon was born October 29, 1883, in Williamsfield, Ashtabula County, Ohio, the son of Philip C. and Effie (Wemple) Bacon. He attended the public schools of Geauga County, Ohio, and after being graduated from high school took a business and commercial course in Warren College.

Mr. Bacon came to Sarasota in May, 1910 and almost immediately bought a partnership with J. W. Baxter in the real estate business. Shortly afterward, he took over the entire business and also established an insurance department in connection with the real estate.

In 1917, Mr. Bacon was engaged to manage the Marco enterprises consisting of the Town of Marco,



EVERETT J. BACON

mercantile stores and claming business, with headquarters at Marco, in Lee County. Late in 1918, he resigned at Marco and became manager of the Park View Apartment Building, in Tampa, and became associated with W. C. Black of that city. Early in 1920 he returned to Sarasota and re-established his insurance and real estate business.

In addition to his business activities, Mr. Bacon has had a long career as a public official. In 1915 he was elected to serve a two-year term on the city council and was also elected as justice of the peace for the 7th district of Manatee County. In 1921, when Sarasota County was created, he was elected to the same office for the entire county.

In the fall of 1921, Mr. Bacon was elected mayor of the City of Sarasota and he served five terms of two years each. During his tenure of office, Sarasota grew from a small town to a thriving resort city. He served during the height of the boom and was at the city's helm when the national depression hit. He was mayor during good times and bad. His record of achievements can be gauged only by reading in the general text of Sarasota's accomplishments during the Roaring Twenties.

During his ten years in office, the city built its new pier at the foot of Main Street; arrangements were made with Andrew McAnsh and his associates to give Sarasota a modern hotel; the city police and

fire departments were modernized; more than fifty miles of paved streets and sidewalks were laid; Payne Terminal was developed; a municipally owned golf course and golf club house were obtained; the Sarasota Trailer Park was established; the city water works plant on Orange Avenue was built; the Sarasota Hospital was erected, and the city limits were extended from one mile square to approximately 17 square miles. In short, while Mr. Bacon was mayor, Sarasota developed from a small mediocre town into the progressive winter resort city which it is today.

In addition to serving as mayor, Mr. Bacon was elected state representative in 1926 and served in the 1927 legislature.

Mr. Bacon is a member of the Masons, Knights of Pythias, and Loyal Order of Moose. He also is a member of the Episcopal Church. All his life he has been interested in hunting and fishing, and has owned and trained some of the best hunting dogs in this section of Florida.

On March 23, 1904, Mr. Bacon was married to Norma A. Stratton. Mrs. Bacon has been active in the Woman's Club and has served as matron of the Eastern Star and regent of the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

### GEORGE LAMB THACKER

George Lamb Thacker was born in Waukegan, Ill., October 20, 1877, the son of Henry and Harriet (Kittridge) Thacker. After being graduated from the high school in Waukegan, he started working in the office of the secretary of the Chicago Board of Trade, where he remained five years.

He then took the jewelers' and optical course at Bradley Polytechnic, in Peoria, Ill., and upon completion of his studies, started a jewelry and optical business in Henry, Ill., where he remained ten years. During this period he took a course in embalming in the Barnes School of Anatomy, Sanitary Science and Embalming, in Chicago, and passed the state board examinations in 1907.

Mr. Thacker came to Sarasota in October, 1910, because of the poor health of his youngest son, George K., who had suffered from bronchitis all through the preceding winter. The family physician advised Mr. Thacker to take his son to a milder climate and he became interested in Sarasota through the advertising carried in Chicago papers by J. H. Lord.

Upon arrival in Sarasota, Mr. Thacker found there was no jewelry store here so he started one almost immediately in a window of the Badger Pharmacy. In 1912, he saw the serious need of a funeral director in Sarasota so he took and passed the Florida State Board examination. In August, 1912, he started Sarasota's first funeral home. In 1925, he sold his jewelry business and built his present funeral home at 142 N. Orange Avenue, facing Seventh Street.

Ever since coming to Sarasota, Mr. Thacker has taken a most active interest in civic affairs. He has supported every worthwhile undertaking and spon-



GEORGE LAMB THACKER

sored innumerable public improvements. In 1912, when Sarasota people approved a bond issue to pay for the first brick street paving, Mr. Thacker was elected secretary and treasurer of the bond trustees.

During three important periods in Sarasota's history, Mr. Thacker served as a member of the city council. He was elected first on December 6, 1913, to serve on the first council after Sarasota had been incorporated as a city. During the following two years, the council took steps to provide vitally needed public improvements. (See General Text).

Mr. Thacker next served on the council during the peak of the Florida boom, during the years 1924, 1925 and 1926. This period brought Sarasota's greatest growth and development. When Mr. Thacker was elected to serve a third term, for the years 1933-35 inclusive, the city was hard hit by the national depression and the council was hard-pressed to provide work for the unemployed. But despite the lack of money, many public improvements were made during this lean period.

Mr. Thacker also served as chairman of the park board 1940-43. He was a member of the first board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce, served as treasurer several terms, and as president twice.

He was a member of the first county welfare board, the first hospital board, treasurer of the first Sarasota chapter of the American Red Cross, member

of the first board of directors of the Tourist Club, now called the Recreation Club, and has been a member of it ever since. He is also a member of Sarasota Lodge 147 F. & A.M., charter member of Sarasota Chapter No. 35, charter member of Trinity Commandery No. 16, charter member of the Order of Eastern Star, and a member of Egypt Temple of Tampa. He is a charter member of the Kiwanis Club, a member of the Bay Shore Country Club, and of Sarasota Yacht Club.

On January 1, 1902, Mr. Thacker was married to Bess Keller. They had two sons: Robert P., who served three years in the Sea Bees, seeing service in Newfoundland and Sai Pan, and is now superintendent of Manasota Burial Park, and George K. Thacker, who served with the Merchant Marine all through the war and is now chief radio operator with the American-Hawaiian Steamship Co. On July 5, 1933, Mr. Thacker was married to Leoto Mason. Mrs. Thacker has served as secretary to the board of the Sarasota chapter of the Red Cross, recording secretary and first vice-president of the Woman's Club, and is now president of the Woman's Society of Christian Service of the Methodist Church.

### THOMAS REED MARTIN

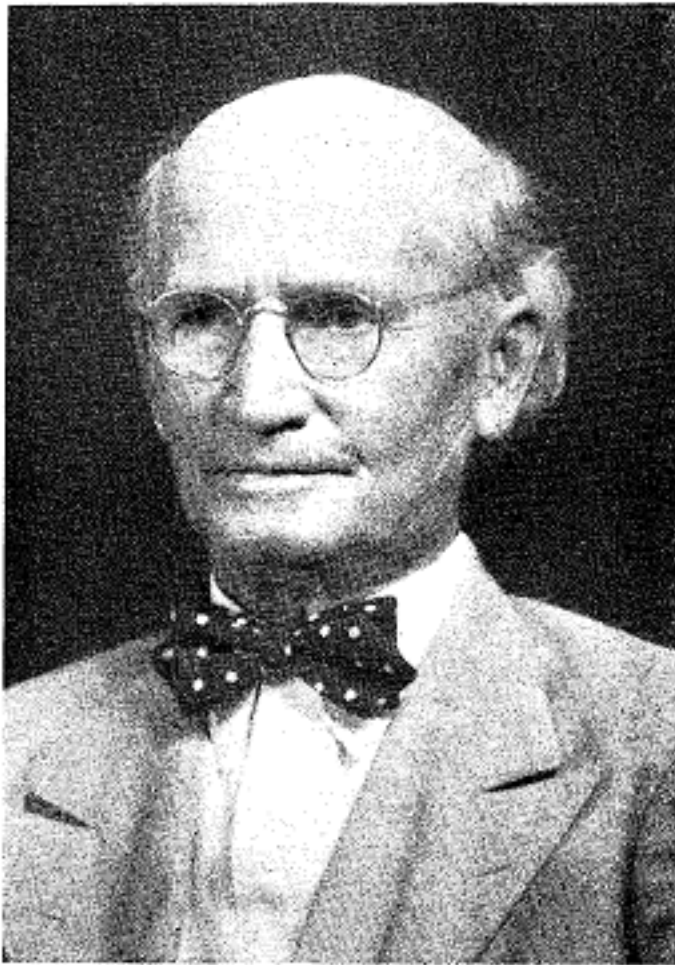
Thomas Reed Martin was born in Menasha, Wis., April 28, 1866, the son of William Davidson and Myra (McKoy) Martin. When he was a child, his family moved to Oshkosh, Wis., and later to Beaver Dam where Mr. Martin was graduated from high school. In 1883, the family moved to Chicago.

Mr. Martin's first full-time job was as a draftsman for the Globe Machinery Co., of Chicago, a concern which manufactured woodworking machinery. He worked his way up to become manager of the company. While with the firm he studied architecture and construction and soon after the turn of the century went into business for himself as an architect and builder.

One of Mr. Martin's clients was Mrs. Potter Palmer. When Mrs. Palmer began making large real estate purchases in the Sarasota region in 1910, she told Mr. Martin that this section of Florida had unlimited possibilities. As a result, he came here in October, 1911, and spent the winter. The following summer Mrs. Palmer engaged him to build The Oaks, her famous home on Little Sarasota Bay near Osprey.

By the time The Oaks was completed, Mr. Martin had become completely sold on the Land of Sarasota and he decided to make it his permanent home. During the three decades which followed he designed more than 500 houses in this section, ranging in cost from several thousand dollars to \$100,000 and more. He also was the architect for many buildings in the business section. Two of the buildings in Bayfront Park, the municipal auditorium and library, were built according to his plans and specifications. He made the original sketches for John Ringling's palatial home.

Mr. Martin is credited with having introduced modern building methods into Sarasota. And in order to make sure that work would be done the way he



THOMAS REED MARTIN

wanted it, he brought many skilled artisans into the city.

On February 19, 1890, Mr. Martin was married to Sadie W. Coffin, of Chicago, a descendent of Benjamin Franklin. One of Mr. Martin's predecessors, incidentally, was General Lewis Cass, the secretary of state in President Monroe's cabinet.

Mr. and Mrs. Martin have four children: Edna, born April 26, 1891, now living with them in Sarasota; Frank C., born October 26, 1893; Jerome K., born July 29, 1895, and Thomas Reed, Jr., born December 10, 1897. All three sons were graduated from high school in Clinton, N. J., where the family lived several years.

Frank C. Martin joined his father in architectural work after returning from World War I and has been associated with him ever since. On March 22, 1922, he was married to Mary Shute, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Smith. They have a daughter, Jean, born July 2, 1923, now Mrs. Fred Steele. Mr. and Mrs. Steele have two children, Fred, Jr., born March 24, 1944, and Nancy, born April 23, 1945.

Jerome K. Martin also was associated with his father for many years as supervising architect. In 1932 he joined the West Coast Lumber Co. and he is now secretary-treasurer of the concern. On December 25, 1918, he was married to Pearl Hand, daughter of Charles W. and Maria (Tatum) Hand, pioneer settlers of East Bee Ridge.

Thomas Reed Martin, Jr., has been associated with the Palmer interests since 1932 and in 1946 was one of the sales managers of Palmer Farms Growers Cooperative Association. On August 16, 1926, he was married to Edna Jones, daughter of Capt. and Mrs. John Coffin Jones. They have three sons: John C., born April 18, 1929; Thomas C., born March 19, 1934, and Allan W., born May 28, 1943.

### MONTE LONG TOWNSEND

Monte Long Townsend, known as M. L. Townsend, was born in Belgrade, Washington County, Missouri, February 2, 1875, the son of Charles Samuel and Mary Samantha (Gibson) Townsend. His parents were married on January 29, 1873, and had eleven children, nine of whom are still living.

After attending public schools at Belgrade, Mr. Townsend studied at Bellevue Collegiate Institute, in Caledonia, Mo. Born and reared on a farm, and being a member of a large family, Mr. Townsend had inculcated into his mind the value of hard work and economy. He and his brothers spent their early years assisting their father in farming and in operating a general mercantile store.

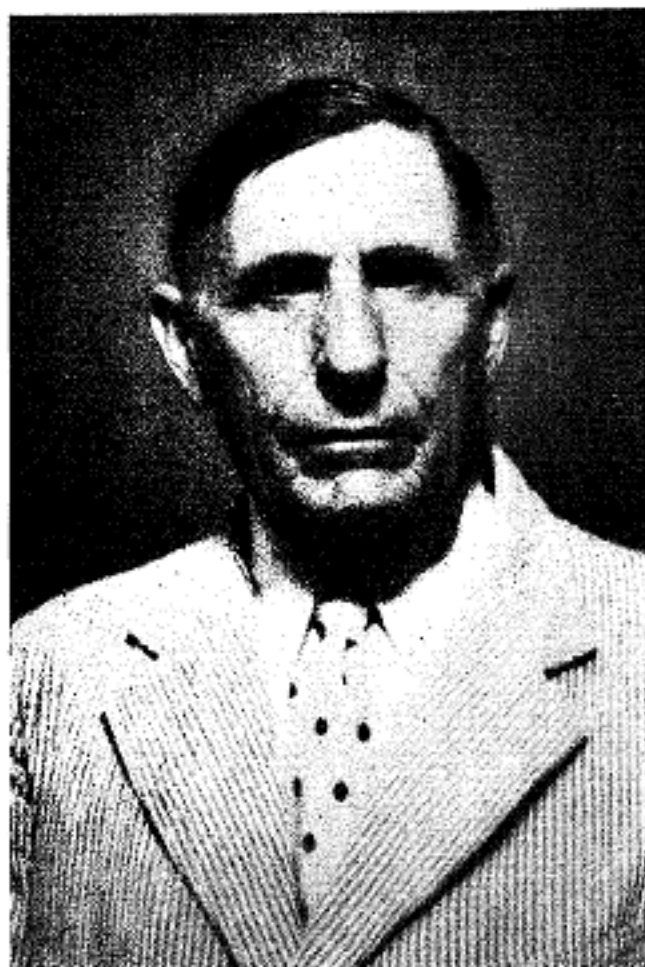
After his school days, Mr. Townsend was employed as a salesman for a large jobbing concern in St. Louis, Mo., and continued to represent the company for 14 years prior to coming to Florida, in January, 1910, because of poor health. After two years of resting, playing and fishing, he regained his strength and began taking an active part in the affairs of the Land of Sarasota.

In 1912, he bought and moved onto his present estate, "Hillcrest," about one and one-half miles south of Osprey. At that time, there were no electric lights in that vicinity and the telephone line was attached to pine trees. Hard-surfaced roads were non-existent and Mr. Townsend transported all his supplies from Sarasota to his home by motorboat.

Upon the creation of Sarasota County, Mr. Townsend became the first elected county commissioner from his district, and served two two-year terms. He was the chairman of the first elected board of county commissioners. While a member of the board, the commissioners greatly expanded the county road system, built many badly needed bridges, and awarded the contract for the county courthouse. Because of his previous business experience, Mr. Townsend was able to help conduct the county affairs on a business-like basis.

In 1923, Mr. Townsend was named the first president of the Sarasota County Fair Association. Later, without advance notice, he was elected vice-president and trust officer of the First Bank & Trust Co. He afterwards served, at the suggestion of Mrs. Charles Ringling and her executive board, as a director of the Ringling Bank & Trust Co., and served until the bank liquidated and paid off its depositors in full.

In 1936, Mr. Townsend was named trustee, by order of Circuit Judge W. T. Harrison, of the Lord



MONTE LONG TOWNSEND

holdings, including the First Bank & Trust Co. building and properties adjoining the bank. In 1940, he sold the bank building to the Palmer National Bank & Trust Co. Later, he sold 106 feet on Main Street and the remaining part of Lord's Arcade to the satisfaction of the bond holders.

Mr. Townsend has been engaged in the real estate business for many years.

He is a Master Mason and a member of the Egypt Temple Mystic Order of the Shrine, of Tampa. He has been active in the affairs of the Methodist Church at Nokomis for many years. His grandfather, William P. Gibson, was a Methodist minister and was on the superannuated list of the St. Louis, Mo., Conference when he died. Most of his ancestors have been Methodists or Baptists.

On June 12, 1900, Mr. Townsend was married to Docia N. Johnson, his sweetheart of the days when they attended country school together. They have a foster son, Joseph B. Townsend, born August 8, 1925, whom they took into their family when he was five years old. He served in the United States Coast Guard during World War II.

Mr. and Mrs. Townsend have seen Sarasota grow from a small fishing village into one of the most popular winter resort cities in Florida and today they are confident that the city's real growth is just beginning. For many years they have loved the beautiful country

along the Myakka River and they now own a large tract there. In this region, Mr. Townsend used to stake his tent while hunting with his friends, and today he likes nothing better than to return there, dream of days gone by, and plan for the future.

## THE RINGLINGS

Originally there were eight—seven sons and one daughter of a German harness maker and his wife who had sought peace and prosperity in America, August and Mary Salome (Julia) Rungeling, whose name was anglicized into Ringling.

For a half century and more, the name Ringling has been almost synonymous with "Circus"—and for three decades, the city of Sarasota has had a deep interest in the fortunes of the "Biggest Show on Earth," due to the fact that three of the Ringling children made Sarasota their home and took leading roles in the development of the city.

The seven Ringling brothers were Al, Alf T., Charles, John, Henry, A. G. and Otto. Al, the oldest, was born in Chicago where Mr. and Mrs. Ringling first lived; Otto was born in Baraboo, Wis. The other five were born in MacGregor, Iowa, where the family lived for many years.



JOHN RINGLING

One spring day in the early Seventies, when the ice was out of the Mississippi and river traffic was beginning to move again, the Ringling boys sat on a pier at MacGregor and watched a tiny circus unload and set up its tent. The youngsters were thrilled—and they became determined to be "circus men" themselves. And they most certainly did! Starting from scratch, they ultimately succeeded in building up an organization known throughout the land.

Al Ringling became a juggler, Charles was a violinist, Alf played the coronet, and the others were acrobats, singers and comedians. John Ringling was the clown of the first troupe and in an old program, dated 1882, was billed as "The Emperor of Dutch Comedians." Their troupe then was known as the Ringling Brothers Classic and Comic Opera Company.

In 1884 the brothers combined with "Yankee" Robinson and took the road as "Yankee Robinson and Ringling Brothers Great Double Shows, Circus and Caravan." They had a capital of 11 wagons and 22 horses. Their billing announced the joint venture as "making a combine of resources unparalleled in the history of tented amusements."

At that time Barnum was at the height of his career and Bailey was a close second. Also in the front rank were Adam Forepaugh and the Sells Brothers. In the years to come, all these were to be absorbed by the brothers who started in business with 11 wagons. They traveled 8,000 miles and gave a thousand exhibitions before they could afford to buy an elephant.

In 1890, "Ringling Brothers United Monster Railroad Shows, Great Triple Circus, Museum and Menagerie, Roman Hippodrome and Universal World's Exposition" had grown large enough to take to the railroad with a train of 18 cars—and three elephants. From then on, the Ringlings couldn't be stopped. In 1907, they purchased Barnum & Bailey and in 1918 the two shows combined. Since then it's been "Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey."

As the years passed, the five Ringling men who built their organization into the world's greatest circus fitted themselves into executive posts. John became the route agent, Alf T. handled the publicity, Charles was in charge of advance billing and actual production, Al was personnel manager and staged the performances, and Otto became treasurer.

The five Ringlings were separated only by death. First, Otto died; then Al, and, in 1919, Alf T.

The coming of John and Charles Ringling to Sarasota is related in the general text, as well as the part each man played in the development of Sarasota.

Charles Ringling died December 3, 1926, after a short illness. He would have been 63 years old December 18. He was survived by his widow, the former Edith Conway, of Baraboo, Wis., to whom he was married in 1892, and two children, Robert and Hester. He was buried in Manasota Park.

John, the last of the Ringling Brothers, died December 2, 1936, at the age of 70. His first wife, Mable, died in 1930. He later married Emily Buck from whom he was divorced shortly before his death.



CHARLES RINGLING

In his will, Mr. Ringling bequeathed to the state his palatial home on Sarasota Bay, valued at approximately \$1,000,000, and the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, valued conservatively at \$15,000,000. After ten years' work settling the estate, extricating it from an almost impenetrable web of debts and claims, the executors, Mrs. Ida Ringling North and John Ringling North, turned the Ringling home and museum over to the state February 9, 1946, and title was accepted by Governor Millard Caldwell, who came here accompanied by his entire cabinet.

Mrs. Ida Ringling North, the widow of Henry Whitestone North, has lived in Sarasota since 1913. For many years her home has been on Bird Key. She has two sons, John Ringling and Henry, who was a lieutenant in the navy during World War II, and a daughter, Salome, the wife of Randolph Wadsworth, of Cincinnati.

(See Index: Ringling Isles, Circus, Causeway, Pier, Chamber of Commerce, Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Museum, Ringling Art School, Longboat Key Bridge, Courthouse Subdivision, Sarasota Terrace Hotel, Banks.)

## JOHN RINGLING NORTH

John Ringling North was born August 14, 1903, in Baraboo, Wis., the son of Henry Whitestone and



JOHN RINGLING NORTH

Ida Lorraine Wilhelmina (Ringling) North. He attended the University of Wisconsin 1921-22 and Yale University 1922-24.

Mr. North was almost literally raised in the circus business. He began as a concession vendor with Ringling Brothers Circus in 1916, during a summer vacation, and, later, was actively connected with it for many years.

After leaving Yale, he went with Salomon Bros. & Hutzler, brokers, New York City; during the winters of 1926-28, he was on the sales force of the John Ringling Estate Co., and during the summers of this period, was cashier of concessions, handling banking of money with the circus.

From 1929 to 1936, Mr. North was customer's man of J. R. Schmeltzer & Co., and then Parrish & Co., New York City; from 1932 until John Ringling's death in 1936, he assisted him in all affairs of the circus, real estate and other interests. From 1937 to 1943, he was president and director of Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows. For the following three years, he served the circus as a director. In April, 1946, he was elected first vice-president and executive officer.

Mr. North is president and director of Ringling Isles, Inc.; St. Louis & Hannibal R.R., White Sulphur Springs & Yellowstone Park R. R., Rockland Oil Co., Sarasota Oil Co., St. Armands-Lido Realty Corp.,

director St. Louis & Troy R. R., Eastland, Wichita Falls & Gulf R. R., and president and director of the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art.

In 1940, he was appointed colonel aide-de-camp, Wisconsin National Guard, by Governor Heil, and in 1941, was appointed a lieutenant-colonel in the State of Texas. He is a fellow of the American Geographic Society, a member of the Catholic Actors' Guild, Psi Upsilon fraternity, and the Episcopal Church. His clubs are: Yale, Players (N.Y.C.), and Sarasota Yacht Club. He married Jane Donnelly, September 2, 1924. (Divorced 1930.) Married Germaine Aussey, of Paris, France, May 11, 1940 (divorced 1945). His home is on Bird Key.

On January 26, 1946, Mr. North and his mother, executors of the estate of John Ringling, announced that the \$15,000,000 Ringling art museum and John Ringling's palatial home could be turned over to the state, as stipulated in Mr. Ringling's will, free and clear of all debts and liens. The state took possession February 9, 1946. (See Index: Ringling Art Museum.)

### JOHN F. BURKET

John F. Burket was born in Findlay, Ohio, June 15, 1875, the son of Judge Jacob F. and Pamy D. (Walters) Burket.

His father was one of Ohio's most outstanding attorneys and served eleven years as one of the justices of the Ohio State Supreme Court, holding the position of chief justice at various times. He retired in January, 1904, because of ill health and then entered into partnership with his sons, Harlan F. and John F., under the firm name of Burket, Burket & Burket, and remained with the law firm until his death on October 9, 1906.

The Burket family is of Swiss or Swiss-German origin and resided from 1490 at or in the vicinity of Basel, Switzerland. In 1758, the paternal great-grandparents of Judge Burket came to America and settled at Reading, Pa. One of their sons, named John, the grandfather of Judge Burket, served in Von Heer's Light Dragoons, designated by the Continental Congress to serve as a special body-guard for General George Washington.

Solomon Burket, father of Judge Burket, moved to Hancock County, Ohio, in October, 1838, and lived there until his death in 1847, leaving a widow and nine children.

John F. Burket was educated at Phillips Exeter Academy, Exeter, N. H., and was graduated in the class of 1896. He then studied at Williams College, Williamstown, Mass., and later at Oberlin College, Ohio, where he was a member of the class of 1899. He completed his law education at the University of Michigan, in Ann Arbor, Mich., class of 1903. He was admitted to the Ohio state bar in June, 1903, and entered the practice of law with his brother under the firm name of Burket & Burket.

In 1912, Mr. Burket was persuaded to come to Sarasota by Ralph C. Caples, whom he had known for



JOHN F. BURKET

many years. He and Mr. Caples together bought the Belle Haven Inn in September and in the following month, came here with his family to make Sarasota his home. He has been prominently identified with the community ever since.

Late in 1913, Mr. Burket was appointed city attorney and he served the city in that capacity until he resigned in the spring of 1927, because of press of work. He also served as attorney for creating the Englewood Road and Bridge District, and participated in proceedings for creating the Sarasota-Venice Road District.

Mr. Burket has been actively connected with the Venice-Nokomis district since 1917 when Dr. Fred H. Albee made large purchases in that region. He handled all the legislation pertaining to the incorporation of Venice as a city for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and later, legislation pertaining to the Venice Harbor and Inlet District.

Mr. Burket was one of the leaders in the movement to divide Manatee County and create the new county of Sarasota. To accomplish this, he made countless speeches and also took part in the political maneuvering and lobbying required to get the special act through the state legislature, in the spring of 1921.

While County Judge W. Y. Perry was ill, Mr. Burket handled his work as attorney for the board of county commissioners, and the board of public instruction, and after Judge Perry's death, was appointed as

attorney for each of the boards, and served about a year.

On September 21, 1905, Mr. Burket was married to Bessie Louise Hoege, daughter of Dr. George L. and Harriett (Walding) Hoege of Fostoria, Ohio. Mr. and Mrs. Burket have two children: Mrs. Harriett Burket Reinecke, of New York City, who is interior decoration editor of "Woman's Home Companion", and Lt. Col. John F. Burket Jr., a graduate of Phillips Exeter Academy, Princeton University and the law department of Yale University, who passed the Florida state bar examinations in October, 1941, and was commissioned and entered service a month later. Late in 1945 he was honorably discharged from the service. He then entered his father's office, becoming associated with him in the practice of law, under the firm name of Burket & Burket.

For many years, Mrs. Burket took a most active part in the work of the Woman's Club and other organizations formed to make Sarasota a better place in which to live.

Mr. and Mrs. Burket have a grandchild, Rosalind Reinecke, born August 22, 1940.

#### PHILLIP H. LEVY

Phillip H. Levy, one of Sarasota's pioneer merchants, was born on August 5, 1882, in Lithuania, Russia, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Paunce Levy. He came to the United States when 14 years old and lived with his brothers, then engaged in business in Baltimore. Later, his brothers established a wholesale clothing business in New York and Mr. Levy went on the road for them as a salesman.

Desiring to live in a milder climate, Mr. Levy came to Sarasota in 1913 and established the New York Store in the old Iverson Building. His stock of merchandise was badly damaged in the great \$100,000 fire in March 8, 1915, when the new Tonnelier Building and several other buildings went up in smoke.

When the Tonnelier building was re-built, Mr. Levy moved his store into it and, in 1921, moved into the Cummer Building on the northwest corner of Main and Pineapple, built by A. E. Cummer especially for the Levy store. In 1933, he moved the store to the new Kress Building where he maintained it until his death on April 27, 1936.

Mr. Levy is credited with having introduced modern merchandising methods into Sarasota and his department store and, later, his women's ready-to-wear store ranked among the best on the Florida West Coast.

From the day of his arrival in Sarasota until his death, Mr. Levy took an active part in civic affairs, church work, and philanthropic movements. He helped to organize the Sarasota County Chamber of Commerce and was its first secretary and treasurer. He was one of the leaders in the successful movement which led to the creation of Sarasota County. He helped to organize and was one of the first presidents of the Sarasota Merchants Association.



PHILLIP H. LEVY

Mr. Levy was a builder, as well as a merchant. He built the Commercial Court, one of the city's principal professional buildings, as well as other downtown structures.

He was a 32nd degree Mason, a past patron of the Sarasota Chapter of the Order of Eastern Star, a Shriner, an Odd Fellow, and a charter member of the Kiwanis Club. He helped actively in building the Sarasota Hospital and served as chairman of the group which organized and built the Jewish Community Center; was an active member of Temple Beth Shalom, and took a leading part in the establishment of a Jewish cemetery.

He was survived by his widow, Cecilia; a daughter, Deborah, and a son, Abraham. Since Mr. Levy's death, his business has been carried on by his widow and son.

#### JAMES WARREN "JACK" CRAWFORD

James Warren "Jack" Crawford was born November 13, 1886, at Beechwood, in Paris, Tenn., the son of Walter and Margaret (Travis) Crawford.

After being graduated from high school in Paris, Tenn., Mr. Crawford studied at the Georgia Robertson College, in Henderson, Tenn. While in college, he entered newspaper work, first working as a com-

positor and then editing a small society newspaper of his own called "The Echo."

Upon leaving college, he went to work for the Frisco Railroad in Birmingham, Ala., as a revising clerk, which position he held for four years. He then went with the Southern Bithulithic Co., of Birmingham, and began making construction work his life occupation.

He first came to Florida in 1910 to handle a large paving and drainage contract in Key West. During the next three years he was engaged on projects in Miami, Tampa and Bradenton. He came to Sarasota in 1914 while with the Southern Asphalt Construction Co., the concern which had the contract for covering the bumpy limerock paving on Main Street with asphalt. While the street was being resurfaced and rebuilt, Mr. Crawford supervised all phases of the work.

Shortly after this project was completed, Mr. Crawford went into business for himself and during the years which followed he specialized in paving roads and the construction of bridges, sewers, and waterworks. He had contracts for paving many of the most important streets in Sarasota and the principal highways of the county. One of the largest contracts he had was for the construction of 9-foot asphalt roads linking Sarasota with Venice, Bee Ridge



JAMES WARREN (JACK) CRAWFORD  
(Photo taken about 1914)

and Fruitville. This contract originally had been given to the Continental Public Works Co. which went bankrupt before the project was well underway.

Mr. Crawford also handled contracts for laying approximately fifty miles of storm and sanitary sewers, and water mains, in Sarasota. In addition, he secured contracts for numerous projects in many other places on the Florida West Coast.

In 1926, Mr. Crawford retired from active business and in recent years he can be found puttering about the grounds of his home "Shore Oaks" in the Indian Beach section—or genially helping the sporting world select their tackle and equipment at Tucker's.

On April 22, 1908, Mr. Crawford was married to Elizabeth Kyle Bartram, of Ashland, Ky. Mr. and Mrs. Crawford have a son, James Warren, Jr., born January 28, 1924.

### FRANCIS ALLEN WALPOLE

Francis Allen Walpole, better known in Sarasota as Frank Walpole, was born in Kosciuska, Miss., September 19, 1872, the son of Richard and Mary (Allen) Walpole, descendants of early American families. During President Cleveland's second administration, Richard Walpole served as revenue officer at Key West. He later became editor of the Sumter County Times.

When twelve years old, Francis Walpole quit school and followed his father's footsteps in the newspaper business. He started work as a "printer's devil," then became a reporter, and gradually worked his way up to become a newspaper editor and owner. He gained his first experience on the Macon News, in Macon, Ga., and on the Atlanta Journal, in Atlanta, Ga.

At the age of 19, Mr. Walpole established the Wildwood Gazette, in Wildwood, Fla., and two years later was elected mayor of the town, becoming the youngest mayor in Florida. Later, he served as editor of the Tampa Herald. He next published the Palmetto Journal, in Palmetto, Fla., and a few years later became editor of the Manatee Record, at Manatee. During his years in the newspaper business, he became widely known as Florida's "fiery, red-haired editor" because of his fearless stand on controversial issues.

In 1907, Mr. Walpole entered the drug business, buying the Manatee Drug Co. In 1916, he came to Sarasota and bought out the drug business which had been started by Fred Knight, Sarasota's pioneer pharmacist, in 1904. Mr. Walpole then operated two stores, the Sarasota Drug Store and Walpole's Pharmacy. He sold the business to the Liggett Co. in 1926 and entered the real estate business.

Mr. Walpole died in Jacksonville Sunday, June 5, 1927, after a short illness.

At the time of his death, Mr. Walpole was one of Sarasota's outstanding realtors and property owners. He was president of the Morris Plan Bank and a director of the First Bank & Trust Co. and the First Trust Co. He was a member of the City Planning Board and had been actively identified with the Chamber of Commerce and Sarasota Realty Board for years. He also was a member of Masonic organizations, the



FRANCIS ALLEN WALPOLE

Knights of Pythias, Odd Fellows, Woodmen of the World, and the Kiwanis Club.

Mr. Walpole played an extremely active part in the creation of Sarasota County (See Index, Sarasota County) and was given the pen with which Gov. Cary A. Hardee signed the bill which made the new county possible. The pen is still in the Walpole family's possession.

On May 12, 1896, Mr. Walpole was married to Ruby Evans Hart, of Wildwood. Mr. and Mrs. Walpole had three children: Francis Hart, born September 12, 1904; Charles Richard, born November 16, 1906, and Robert M., born August 1, 1911.

Francis Hart Walpole was married to Corrine Maxwell Spencer, on May 20, 1931. With his brother Charles he re-established the Walpole Pharmacy in 1936 and has been in the concern ever since. In December, 1945, he was elected as a City Commissioner. Charles was married to Priscilla A. Mangold May 8, 1932, and during World War II served as 1st Cl. boatswain mate in the navy, being stationed two years in the Aleutians. Robert was married to Betty Traynor on April 17, 1936 and they have a son, Robert Traynor Walpole. During World War II he served more than three years in the navy as chief commissary steward. He was honorably discharged in August, 1945; Charles was honorably discharged in September, 1945.

## FLOYD L. ZIEGLER

Floyd L. Ziegler was born October 2, 1896, in Georgetown, Brown County, Ohio, the son of Frank J. and Ella (Miller) Ziegler. He attended public schools in Ohio and in Parkersburg, W. Va. He came to Sarasota January 27, 1916, and after spending two years here left and attended the Detroit Technical School until August, 1918, when he enlisted in the army.

Late in 1918, after being discharged from the army, Mr. Ziegler returned to Sarasota County and went to work at a large saw mill south of Venice at a place known as Manasota. He remained there as commissary manager and also postmaster until 1929.

In 1924 Mr. Ziegler was elected county commissioner and served three terms. During his time in office, the county's entire road system was planned and built and the courthouse was erected. He resigned from the office in June, 1930, to enter the oil business and since then has been Sarasota county agent for the Standard Oil Company.

Mr. Ziegler has devoted much of his time for three decades to civic affairs. He has been a director of the Chamber of Commerce and Hospital Board, and is a member of the advisory committee of the Salvation Army and a troop committeeman of the Boy Scouts. In 1945, he was chairman of the Citizens Committee for Commission Form of Government for the City of

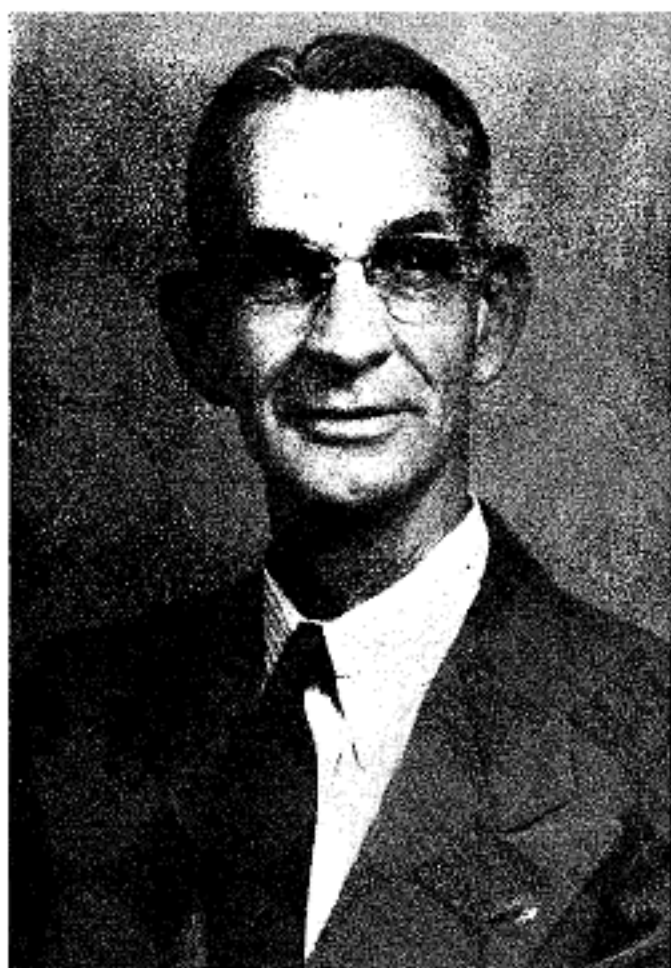
Sarasota. He is a member of the Masonic Lodge, Egypt Temple Shrine, and the American Legion.

In 1940, Mr. Ziegler was appointed as a member of the selective service board for Sarasota County and served as chairman throughout the war and after the war ended. He is a member and an elder and treasurer of the First Presbyterian Church and a teacher in the boys' class.

On October 14, 1922, Mr. Ziegler was married to Madeline H. Clark. Mr. and Mrs. Ziegler have three children, Jocelyn Anne, born January 11, 1925, a graduate of Sarasota High School and in 1946 a senior at the Florida State College for Women, majoring in home economics; Martha Jo, born February 2, 1931, and Floyd, born August 22, 1932.

Mr. Ziegler's father, who was connected with the International Harvester Co. for approximately 30 years, and his wife's father, H. S. Clark, were attracted to the Land of Sarasota by the development of the Palmers in the Bee Ridge section where both families farmed for a number of years. Mr. Clark had been in the shoe business in Massachusetts where Mrs. Ziegler was born.

Mrs. Ziegler is superintendent of the primary department of the Presbyterian Church School and has been active for many years in Garden Club work, as well as other civic affairs.



FLOYD L. ZIEGLER

## WILLIAM JUDSON BOYLSTON

William Judson Boylston was born near Aiken, S. C., the son of Francis G. and Ella (Reckley) Boylston. After attending public schools in Aiken and Savannah, Ga., Mr. Boylston worked in drug stores in Savannah, New York, Bradenton, and Sarasota, coming here the first time in 1917.

In February, 1918, he enlisted in the medical corps but was soon transferred to the balloon division of the air corps. He trained at Fort Screven, Georgia; Camp John Wise, San Antonio, Tex.; Camp Morrison, Virginia; Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Maryland, and was honorably discharged at Camp Gordon, Georgia, in May, 1919. While in service, he contracted Tic Douloureux, which affected his hearing and vision.

Returning to Sarasota after the war, Mr. Boylston re-entered the drug business but soon left and worked for wholesale drug concerns in Savannah and New York. He came back here in 1926 and for a year was engaged in the real estate business. During 1927 and 1928 he was associated with Badger Pharmacy. He then bought the Misto Water Company. When the concern's plant burned in 1929 he started in a new location with a new plant, under the name of the Perfection Water Company. This concern, which produces distilled water, has operated ever since.

In 1937, Mr. Boylston re-entered the real estate business as a broker and now has offices in the Cumer Arcade.

For many years, Mr. Boylston has been extremely active in Sarasota Bay Post No. 30 of the American Legion, holding practically all offices in the organization at various times. During 1945-46, he served as



WILLIAM JUDSON BOYLSTON

commander. He has been chairman of the Sarasota County Veterans Committee since it was organized. He is a member of the Sarasota Realty Board, the Chamber of Commerce, and Episcopal Church.

Mr. Boylston has two children: Robert Judson, born September 15, 1931, and Joan Arline, born February 26, 1933.

#### S. DAVIS BOYLSTON

S. Davis Boylston was born in Aiken, S. C., July 16, 1900, the son of Frank Garland and Elizabeth (Reckley) Boylston. He attended the public schools in Aiken and was graduated from the Aiken high school in June, 1917.

He then came to Sarasota where he was employed a short time at Walpole's Pharmacy, leaving to enlist in the navy. He served as pharmacist's mate and, while in the service, made eight round trips across the Atlantic.

After being honorably discharged from the navy, Mr. Boylston attended the Max Morris School of Pharmacy, in Macon, Ga. He then returned to Sarasota and was re-employed by Walpole's as a pharmacist. He became the owner of Badger Pharmacy in 1923 and has been the proprietor of it ever since. The Badger Pharmacy has been located in the building at Main



S. DAVIS BOYLSTON

and Pineapple erected by J. Hamilton Gillespie since the concern was founded in 1907.

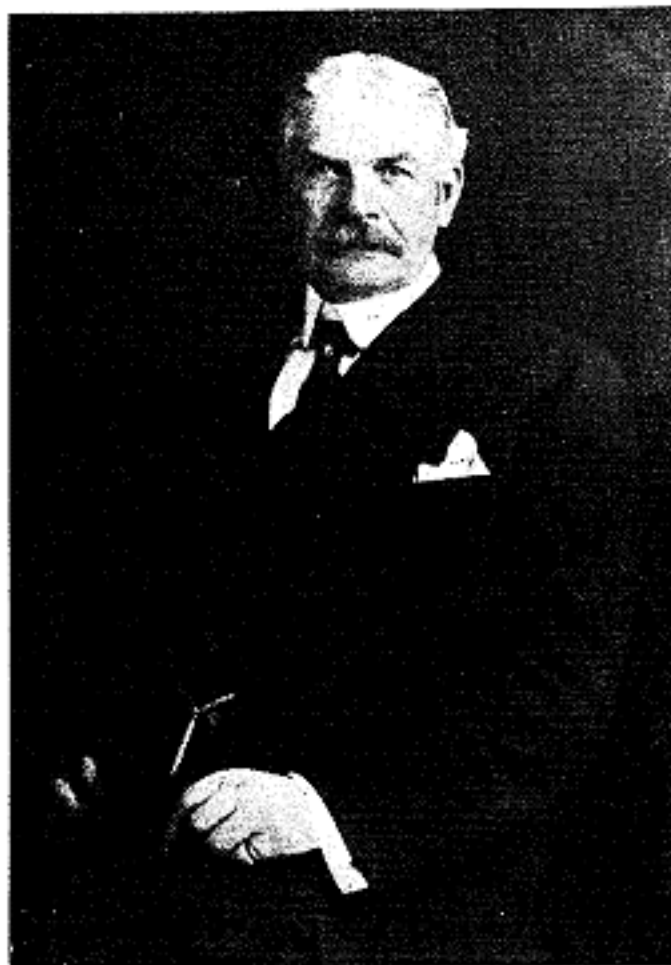
Mr. Boylston is a member of Sarasota Lodge No. 147, F. & A. M., and of Egypt Temple of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine. His hobbies are fishing and hunting.

On May 8, 1922, Mr. Boylston was married to Caroline T. Steckert. Mr. and Mrs. Boylston have two children: Elizabeth Anne, born March 4, 1926, and William Steckert, born December 29, 1927. Mrs. Boylston has been active in Red Cross work.

#### CALVIN NATHANIEL PAYNE

Calvin Nathaniel Payne was born at Irvineton, Warren County, Pa., May 25, 1844, being the son of Nathaniel Payne, a lumberman and farmer who settled in Warren County in 1840. The lumber woods offered few educational opportunities to the boy and what schooling he secured by walking six miles to Warren to attend the public school there.

At the age of 15 he was of large stature for his years and he started out making his own way in life. Working for the Philadelphia & Erie Railroad, he soon became one of the youngest conductors in the country. Soon after the discovery of the Drake oil well in 1859 he was attracted to the oil industry and his active life



CALVIN NATHANIEL PAYNE

in the oil business began with his foot in a spring-pole strap, working for an oil driller.

A few years later he began drilling wells under contract and by 1867 he had become an oil producer on his own account. In 1871 he became part owner and manager of the Payne & McCray Pipe Line, perhaps the first commercial oil pipe line ever placed in operation.

In December, 1885, Mr. Payne accepted a position with the Standard Oil Co. to build up and manage a natural gas business, and in that capacity built the pipeline carrying natural gas to Buffalo, N. Y., the first big city to use that fuel for domestic service. He was identified with Standard Oil (New Jersey) until 1911, holding positions in many of the company's subsidiaries and affiliated concerns. From 1911 to his death on September 13, 1926, he was active in the formation and development of oil and gas companies in Oklahoma and Texas.

In 1917, Mr. Payne became intrigued by news stories regarding Sarasota and came here with his wife and daughter Florence, Mrs. A. J. Byles, and rented a small house near the Woman's Club. During his second winter here, he arranged for the purchase of the Winship Place, second house south of Strawberry Avenue on Gulf Stream Avenue. This was a typical two-story, galleried southern house to which Mr. Payne made many improvements. He lived there each win-

ter until 1926 when he no longer was able to travel.

Mr. Payne's enthusiasm for Sarasota was expressed in many ways. He was the leader in the movement to clean up the waterfront and, to provide a place where industries could locate, he financed the construction of Payne Terminal (q. v.) which he later turned over to the city without profit.

An ardent golfer, Mr. Payne loaned money repeatedly to the Sarasota Golf Holding Co. to make improvements in the course and clubhouse. (See Index: Golf). His gift of land to the city resulting in the establishment of Payne Park (q. v.) was by far the most outstanding gift ever made to the city.

In November, 1866, Mr. Payne married Martha Elizabeth Dempsey, daughter of Capt. F. Dempsey, of Erie, Pa. Mrs. Payne was active in the Woman's Club from the time she first came here until Mr. Payne's death. She then lived in Erie until her death on March 13, 1934. She helped to build the Presbyterian Church, for which she and Mr. Payne had donated land. In Titusville, Pa., the Paynes' former home, she was president of the foreign missionary society for many years and superintendent of the children's department of the Sunday school.

Surviving Mr. and Mrs. Payne were four children: Francis H., late president of the American Meter Co.; Ernestine, late wife of John M. Tate, of Sewickley, Pa.; Christy, who has his home here, and Florence, widow of Axtell J. Byles, of Ardsley-on-Hudson, N. Y., who was president of the American Petroleum Institute at the time of his death.

Christy Payne, who was born in Butler, Pa., February 27, 1874, was graduated from Princeton with an A. B. degree in 1895. He served as land department clerk of the South Penn Oil Co., Oil City, Pa., 1895-98; was admitted to the Pennsylvania bar, 1898, and began practice in Pittsburgh; secretary and attorney of Peoples Natural Gas Co., 1903-20, and president, 1920-33; director Standard Oil (New Jersey), 1927-35, and vice-president and treasurer from 1933 to 1935, when he retired and made his home in Sarasota. His clubs are: Ivy (Princeton), Woodway Country (Springdale, Conn.), Allegheny County (Sewickley, Pa.), Rolling Rock (Ligonier, Pa.), and Sarasota Bay Country and Cabana (Sarasota).

On October 7, 1897, Mr. Payne was married to Anne L. Neill, of Warren, Pa. Mr. and Mrs. Payne have two living children: Martha Payne Emerson, of Greenwich, Conn., and Christy Payne, Jr., of Pittsburgh, Pa.

### ALBERT EDWIN CUMMER

Albert Edwin Cummer was born in Buffalo, N. Y., August 3, 1876, the son of Franklin D. and Eliza (Myler) Cummer. When he was a youth, the family moved to Cleveland where Mr. Cummer attended high school.

His father was an inventor and one of his inventions was a dryer for phosphate and calcium, superior to anything then manufactured. When Mr. Cummer was 17 years old, he first came to Florida, in 1893,



ALBERT EDWIN CUMMER

to install the Cummer dryers in phosphate plants at Ocala, Peace River, Dunnellon and other sections where phosphate was being produced. Because of the inadequate transportation facilities of those days, Mr. Cummer had to travel from place to place by horse and buggy, often over almost impassable roads.

Later, the firm of F. D. Cummer & Son was organized and Mr. Cummer aided his father in inventing new processes for the utilization of asphalt for road building purposes. The first asphalt streets in Sarasota, incidentally, were laid with Cummer machines.

The concern now makes all types of road building machinery and Cummer asphalt plants have been established in practically every civilized country in the world. The largest plant is located in New York City and has broken all records for asphalt production. While the company was expanding its business, Mr. Cummer spent many years abroad, supervising installations and aiding in the organization of new subsidiaries.

Mr. Cummer first came to Sarasota in 1919 because of ill health. Many of his friends believed that he would not recover his strength. But Sarasota sunshine, coupled with endless hours of fishing in the bay and Gulf, enabled him to regain his youthful vigor. And before two years had elapsed, he was "back in the harness." From then on, he devoted part of his

energy to Sarasota activities. He made large purchases of real estate, built a home on Gulf Stream Avenue, and in 1921 erected the store building now standing on the northwest corner of Main and Pineapple.

Mr. Cummer then built the Cummer Arcade on Pineapple Avenue to be used as Sarasota's first modern postoffice. The arcade was completed and the postoffice opened there, early in 1923.

Mr. Cummer's most recent development is Cummer Park (Harbor Acres) on the bayfront just a little south of Hudson Bayou. This development was started in 1937 but work was interrupted by the war.

On November 7, 1908, Mr. Cummer was married to Louise West, of Syracuse, N. Y. Mr. and Mrs. Cummer have one son, Edwin West, born September 20, 1917, who was educated in University School, in Cleveland, Exeter Preparatory School, Yale University, and the University of Michigan. An attorney, he is now employed by the First Cleveland Corporation, Cleveland.

Mr. Cummer is a member of the Union Club and Mayfield Country Club, Cleveland, and the Church of the Redeemer (Episcopal), in which both he and Mrs. Cummer take an active part. Mrs. Cummer started the Sarasota Garden Club and held the first two annual flower shows in her home.

### SAMUEL W. GUMPERTZ

Samuel W. Gumpertz was born in Washington, D. C., the son of Herman and Elizabeth (Melville) Gumpertz. When he was a child, the family moved to San Francisco where he attended public schools for three years. When nine years old, he joined the Jackley family of acrobats with the Montgomery-Queen Circus and traveled with the troupe until his mother died, four years later.

Mr. Gumpertz then was adopted by Ned Napier, of Sweetwater, Tex., with whom he worked until he was 18. Circus life again proved an irresistible lure and he joined the Buffalo Bill Show as a rough rider.

In 1893, he changed occupations. During the winter he served as general manager of the Col. John D. Hopkins Circuit of Theatres from Chicago to New Orleans and in the summer he operated four amusement parks in St. Louis. In 1894, while manager of Hopkins Transoceanic Vaudeville Show, he engaged Eugene Sandow, the strong man, from the father of Florenz Ziegfeld, with the stipulation that he take Flo Ziegfeld to look out for Sandow's interest. And that was the first appearance in the show business of the famous Flo Ziegfeld.

Mr. Gumpertz also was the first manager Harry Houdini ever had, in 1897. Within two years he increased Houdini's income from \$40 a week to over \$3,000. Under Gumpertz management, Houdini appeared in theatres throughout the United States and Continental Europe.

In 1903, Mr. Gumpertz was engaged by Sen. William H. Reynolds, of Brooklyn, to help build Coney Island's Dreamland, one of the largest amusement

parks in the world. He remained there until it burned in 1911. He also served as general manager for Senator Reynolds in developing Long Beach, L. I. One of his "stunts" at Long Beach gained nation-wide publicity. He chartered a special train and took six elephants, along with hundreds of "prospects", to the island. Then, while cameras clicked, the elephants were used to demolish the eleven old bungalows and several two-story houses which had to be torn down before the development work could proceed. In two hours, the elephants were finished—and the story was headlined in newspapers throughout the country.

In 1912, Mr. Gumpertz became general manager of Realty Associates in the development of Brighton Beach, Brooklyn. He remained with the organization 20 years. From 1932 until 1937, he was senior vice-president and general manager of Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows. From 1938 to date, he has been general manager for Hamid's Million Dollar Pier in Atlantic City.

Mr. Gumpertz, a close friend of John Ringling for many years, first came to Sarasota in 1919 and for three winters lived in the Ringling home. In 1922, he built his present home on Sunset Point. He was associated with Mr. Ringling from 1922 to 1932 in developing Ringling Isles.

In 1924, he and Mr. Ringling persuaded John McGraw to bring the Giants to Sarasota for spring training. Two years later, the two men built the

Lido Beach Bathing Pavilion, the first modern bathing pavilion in this section. In 1932, Mr. Gumpertz purchased The Lodge, formerly located near the ACL depot, and had it moved in seven sections to the beach where it was converted into the Lido Beach Hotel.

Mr. Gumpertz constructed, furnished and equipped the penthouse addition on the Halton Hospital in which 1,500 operations have been performed upon under-privileged children by Dr. Joseph Halton without charge. Mr. Gumpertz also donated land at Crescent Beach to Sunniland Council of the Boy Scouts which was sold later, and the proceeds have been used to establish a trust fund for the Scouts.

Mr. Gumpertz has been an active member of the Sarasota Park Board since it was first created in 1938 and has worked constantly for the beautification of the city. He also helped to get the Lido Beach Casino project approved by the federal government. Since 1938, he has been president of the Longboat Cabana Club.

Mr. Gumpertz' first wife, the former Evie Stetson, of Boston, who died July 9, 1931, was a vaudeville star for many years, having played with Janet Melville, sister of Mr. Gumpertz, under the billing Melville & Stetson; she also took Fay Templeton's place with Weber & Fields and played at the Broadway Music House. On September 15, 1943, Mr. Gumpertz was married to Beatrice F. Wood, of Methuen, Mass.



SAMUEL W. GUMPERTZ

### ERNEST ARTHUR SMITH

Ernest Arthur Smith was born at Manchester, N. H., July 18, 1878, the son of A. B. and Ida (Elliott) Smith, both natives of New Hampshire. His father, a jeweler, was a member of the family of Smiths who settled in New England in Colonial days. Eleven generations of Smiths were born in Brentwood, N. H.

After studying in the public schools in Manchester, he attended high school in Haverhill, Mass. Later, he started working for a piano store, in Manchester, N. H., of which he became manager after he had completed his high school course. With his brother he later formed there the Smith Brothers Piano Stores organization. He then entered the automobile business and became the head of one of the largest auto distributing agencies in the New England states.

Mr. Smith "retired" from his active endeavors in 1921 and came to Sarasota, intending to have a long vacation. But he soon tired of loafing and within a few months he became an active participant in community affairs. He entered the real estate business and later became president of the Sarasota Abstract Co.

In 1922, Mr. Smith played a leading part in the reorganization of the Chamber of Commerce and for five years served as executive vice-president of the organization, without pay, while Charles Ringling and John Ringling were the presidents. He then served two years as president of the Chamber.

Mr. Smith was elected mayor late in 1931 when the city's financial condition was in a chaotic state,

due to the national depression. When he took office, in January, 1932, he found that the city owed \$6,200,000 in principal and past due interest, and that its credit was exhausted. The city was then obligated to pay five per cent interest on its outstanding bonds.

Mr. Smith was re-elected mayor in 1933 and 1935. He did not run for re-election in 1937 but his friends persuaded him to seek the office again in 1939 and he was re-elected by a large majority. And he was also re-elected in 1941 and 1943. Altogether, he served as Sarasota's mayor for twelve years, establishing a record which probably never will be surpassed by any man. He left the office when the city manager form of government went into effect in January, 1946.

While head of the city, Mr. Smith succeeded in refunding the city's debt, without cost to the city, and reduced the interest rate to three per cent, thereby effecting a saving to Sarasota of approximately \$100,000 a year. When he left office, the city's financial affairs were in an excellent condition and its credit had been re-established, despite the fact that the city had suffered seriously from the worst national depression in the country's history.

During Mayor Smith's twelve years in office many vitally needed public improvements were made without any increase in taxes or levying new bond issues. Through the help of various government agencies, water mains were extended to outlying sections, a water softening plant was installed, and fire hydrants

were placed in the north and south sections, thereby cutting insurance rates.

Mayor Smith also led the movement to acquire the land on which is now located the municipal auditorium, the Chidsey Memorial Library, the recreational building, and the playgrounds. With the help of the Garden Clubs and other organizations, he succeeded in making this park, known as Bayfront Park, one of the city's main assets.

While mayor, Mr. Smith also helped acquire the land for a municipal airport which, during the war, was used as army air base; he made Lido Beach a paying proposition; he aided in the development of the Sarasota Trailer Park, making it one of the best in the country, and with WPA help he managed to put in the Orange Avenue storm sewer, build new sea walls, lay three miles of sidewalks, widen Osprey Avenue bridge, and make other major improvements. He also improved and expanded the police and fire departments.

As mayor, he served as judge of the police court for twelve years with only one appeal to a higher court. He made plans for a sewer and water system to take care of a city of 50,000 people and arranged for government grants to take care of the engineering costs.

Mr. Smith is now engaged in the development and sales of Harbor Acres.

Since coming to Sarasota, the entire Smith family has been active in civic enterprises. His father, at 80, was chairman of the park board and was responsible for the planting of thousands of trees; also, with the help of Frank Binz, Sr., in raising through the Rotary Club, money for uniforms and instruments for the high school band. His brother, W. E. Smith, was chairman of the OPA War Price and Rationing Board throughout the war.

In 1914, Mr. Smith was married to Mrs. Jean B. Shute, of Boston, Mass. Mr. Smith had two children: Lane E. Smith, who died in the army during World War I, and Elliot H. Smith, now manager of the Florida Power & Light Co., in Punta Gorda, Fla. A stepson, George C. Shute, died in the service during World War II. His stepdaughter, Mary Hall, is the wife of Frank C. Martin, Sarasota architect.

Mrs. Smith was very active in raising funds for building and furnishing the hospital and, since it was built, in improving and maintaining it. She served as vice-president and chairman of two Red Cross drives and has been active in raising money for every worthwhile civic enterprise. Much of her time, during the past twenty years, has been devoted to welfare work and helping persons in need.



ERNEST ARTHUR SMITH

### ANDREW McANSH

Andrew McAnsh, builder of the first modern hotel in Sarasota, was born in Scotland, the son of John and Christina (McGill) McAnsh. When he was five years old the family moved to America, settling first near Toronto, Can. Two years later the family moved to Chicago where Mr. McAnsh attended public schools and business college.



ANDREW McANSH

After completing his business course, Mr. McAnsh worked four years in the treasurer's office of Cook County. He then entered business for himself, investing savings of about \$500 and making a profit of \$4,900 at the end of the first year. He sold the business after the first Chicago World's Fair, in 1893.

Mr. McAnsh was then elected to the State Board of Equalization of Illinois and later became chairman of the board. After resigning from the board he entered the furniture business, establishing three plants, one at Cheboygan, Wisc., one in Holland, Mich., and the third in Lenoir, N. C. He sold the company in 1907 and incorporated the Railway Terminal Warehouse Co., in Chicago, becoming its secretary-treasurer. He later built many large apartments in Chicago and Wichita, Kan.

He came to Sarasota first in September, 1922, and bought property on the waterfront. He then organized the Mira Mar Corporation (q.v.). Ground was broken for the Mira Mar apartments on October 5, 1922 and the structure was completed and ready for occupancy early in January. In July, 1923, the Mira Mar hotel was started and completed late in the fall. The Mira Mar Auditorium, with a seating capacity of 1200, was built at the same time as the hotel. In the fall of 1925, he started the development of Mira Mar Beach Subdivision and built the Mira Mar Casino on Siesta Key.

Mr. McAnsh is a widower, his wife, Bertha Deegan McAnsh, having died on June 10, 1945. He has two children, Byron and Mrs. W. D. Foreman. Mr. McAnsh is a 32nd degree Mason.

### WILLIAM D. FOREMAN

William D. Foreman was born in Chicago, Ill., June 4, 1879, the son of William H. and Armista (Hardesty) Foreman. He attended public schools in Chicago and then studied engineering and commercial law in Athenaeum College.

Always mechanically minded, he began tinkering with automobiles when a youth and, after leaving college, became a race driver and automobile salesman. To demonstrate the durability of the then "new-fangled horseless carriages," he made many 1,000-mile non-stop endurance runs in the Chicago district.

While still in his twenties, he invented a number of devices for making autos more efficient. His inventions included improvements in the carburetion and electrical systems which were widely adopted in the industry. In 1905, he began manufacturing axles and axle shafts, with a plant in Chicago, and continued as head of the concern until 1943. In 1939, he began manufacturing battery charging equipment, which his concern is still producing.



WILLIAM D. FOREMAN

Mr. Foreman first came to Sarasota in the fall of 1922 and heavily invested in waterfront property. He also became one of the original directors of the Mira Mar Corporation which built the Mira Mar Hotel, and Mira Mar Auditorium. In 1938, he became the owner of the hotel and is still active in the direction of its affairs.

He is a member of the Chicago Athletic Club, Masonic lodge and the Shrine, and the Edgewater Golf Club, of Chicago, and is president of the Sarasota Sun and Surf Club. He is also a member of the Christian Science Church. His hobbies are boating and fishing.

His interest in boating, coupled with his lifelong interest in competitive sports, led him to take up hydroplane racing many years ago and from 1924 to 1931 he held the world's single-engine championship. He established a world's record for a boat of that type by attaining a speed of 76.31 miles an hour in a race at Cincinnati.

In October, 1911, Mr. Foreman was married to Florence McAnsh, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew McAnsh, of Chicago. Mrs. Foreman was active during the war in the Red Cross and U.S.O. and is a member of the Woman's Club and Palm Circle Garden Club.

### CHARLES E. CORRIGAN

Charles E. Corrigan, a pioneer in the electrical industry who came to Sarasota to retire but instead became one of the city's most active and public spirited citizens, was born August 29, 1863, in Martinsburgh, N. Y., the son of John and Charlotte (Hefferman) Corrigan. He received his elementary education in his home town and then enrolled in Lowville Academy, from which he was graduated in 1883.

After a brief business career in Minneapolis, he organized the American Electric Vehicle Company in Chicago in 1892 and built the first electrically driven vehicle ever constructed. This machine was sold to a Chicago department store which used it as the world's first "horseless delivery wagon." Its first trip was made to deliver a package to Mr. Corrigan's wife. Soon afterward, Mr. Corrigan published the first automobile catalogue in the United States.

On March 23, 1896, Mr. Corrigan received written permission from the Chicago park commission for his machines to operate in the city parks. Up to that time, no "horseless carriages" had been allowed to travel over any of the park boulevards or drives. On April 26, 1900, Mr. Corrigan received similar permission from the park commission of New York City, thereby opening the parks to automobiles. In the same year, he was awarded a gold medal by the French government at the Paris exposition for his leadership in the production of electric automobiles.

Mr. Corrigan quit the automobile business in 1901 and engaged in the manufacture of flexible conduits, becoming vice-president of the Osborn Flexible Conduit Co., of New York. In 1907, he went to Pittsburgh where he merged the conduit business with the



CHARLES E. CORRIGAN

National Metal Molding Co., of which he became vice president.

In Pittsburgh, Mr. Corrigan was recognized as one of the city's most successful manufacturers. He was a member of many clubs and societies. Among these were the Duquesne Club, Pittsburgh Press Club, Pittsburgh Country Club, Old Colony Club, Au Sable Trout and Game Club, and Woodmont Club. He also belonged to many manufacturers' associations.

On February 6, 1895, Mr. Corrigan was married to Alice Melita Potwin, daughter of Henry and Annie (Smith) Potwin, of Chicago.

Mr. and Mrs. Corrigan established their winter home in Sarasota during the early Twenties and immediately became actively identified with the city's civic and social affairs. They won the high regard of their fellow citizens because of their many philanthropic deeds and the support they gave to every project for the betterment of the city.

As a hobby, Mr. Corrigan established a poultry farm near Bradenton, known as the Crescent Farms, which he developed into one of the largest and most scientifically operated poultry farms in the nation.

Mr. Corrigan died March 24, 1928, at St. Vincent's Hospital in Jacksonville after a short illness. Funeral services were held on March 28 in St. Martha's Catholic Church and burial was made in Manasota Cemetery.

Mr. and Mrs. Corrigan had five children: Ruth Frances, born July 11, 1896, now the wife of Walter Gordon Fraunheim, of Sarasota; John Potwin, born January 11, 1898, an ensign in the navy during World War I and now a citrus grower and manager of the Florida Gladiolus Growers Association, with offices in Sarasota; Mary Alice, born December 18, 1899, now the wife of Robert L. Miller, of New Orleans; Charles Eugene, Jr., born November 3, 1901, now an investment banker in New Orleans; and Francis Hughes, born February 21, 1907, now manager of Crescent Farms.

Mrs. Corrigan, who has continued to live in Sarasota, now has nineteen grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

### FRED FRISBIE WOOLLEY

Fred Frisbie Woolley was born in Hartford, Conn., the son of George H. and Ella (Frisbie) Woolley. He was educated in the public schools of Hartford and at Yale University.

In 1923 he came to Sarasota with Irving Bacheller, author, and Edward H. Brewer, winter resident of Winter Park, Fla., and almost immediately purchased the land now known as Avondale and 93 acres east of it known as Avon Heights. Later the same year a stock company was incorporated with \$150,000



FRED F. WOOLLEY

paid in capital. The company, known as the Bacheller-Brewer Corp., purchased McClellan Park in its entirety with the exception of the lots previously sold by the Misses Katherine and Daisy McClellan, the original developers.

The company spent much time and money developing Avondale, putting in streets, sidewalks, a modern water system and parkway planting. Three houses were built in the subdivision for development purposes at a cost of \$75,000. Hudson Bayou was dredged and sea-walled. The Bacheller-Brewer Corp. proved to be profitable to the stockholders and also made a definite contribution to the community.

Mr. Woolley was active in Chamber of Commerce affairs for many years. He is a member of the Masonic Lodge and has been an active worker in the Christian Science Church. Twice married, Mr. Woolley has three children: Joan, who served in World War II at the Dayton, O., air base; Fred, Jr., who was a paratrooper during the war and was commissioned a first lieutenant, and Hope, who in 1946 was a student at Elmira College, Elmira, N. Y.

### JOHN MORRIS RHOADES

John Morris Rhoades, better known as Jack Rhoades, was born in Lakeland, Fla., June 24, 1909, the son of George Allen and Sarah Elizabeth (Newsom) Rhoades. His father was a native of Alabama and his mother of Georgia.

Mr. Rhoades attended public schools in Lakeland and Winter Haven until early in 1923, when his family came to Sarasota. His father became superintendent of the H. S. Bonnell Plumbing Co., and Jack Rhoades started learning the business as an apprentice. He continued his education by studying at night, specializing in subjects pertaining to plumbing and heating.

In 1929 his father started the plumbing firm of George A. Rhoades & Sons which Jack entered a year later. The concern was first located at 419 Main Street and later at 240 Main Street.

In 1939 Jack Rhoades assumed ownership of the firm which soon afterwards was moved to its present location at 441 S. Pineapple. The concern handles all manufacturers' plumbing supplies and is the local distributor for Permutit Water Softeners, Wayne Oil Burners and Heating Systems and Aurora Water Systems. It also sells plumbing supplies of the Crane, Standard, and Kohler companies.

During World War II, Mr. Rhoades served a year as mechanical engineer for the Federal Public Housing Authority, Region No. 4 and was responsible for plumbing and heating installation in defense and war housing projects in 8 southeastern states. His headquarters were in Atlanta, Ga., and while there he took a night course in combustion engineering at Georgia School of Technology.

Mr. Rhoades is a past president and a member of the Sarasota Master Plumbers Association and is chairman of the Board of Plumbing Examiners for the City of Sarasota. In 1946 he was appointed plumbing



JOHN MORRIS RHOADES

consultant to the bureau of sanitary engineering of the Florida State Board of Health. He is now president of the Florida State Association of Master Plumbers & Heating Dealers, Inc. He was a charter member of the Lions Club and is now a member of the Kiwanis Club; is a past exalted ruler of Sarasota Elks Lodge No. 1519, and is a member of the Chamber of Commerce and Junior Chamber of Commerce.

On June 29, 1940 Mr. Rhoades was married to Mrs. Elizabeth Dell (Smith) Neely, of Shreveport, La. Mrs. Rhoades has two children: Elizabeth Jeanne Neely, born November 6, 1924 and Elbert Fleming Neely, Jr., born April 1, 1927. Elizabeth Jeanne was graduated from Sarasota High School and Stetson University and is now bookkeeper for J. M. Rhoades Co. Elbert Fleming Neely, who also attended Sarasota High School and was graduated from the Georgia Military Academy, was serving in 1946 in the U. S. Marine Corp. Mrs. Rhoades is a member of the D.A.R. and the Descendants of Signers of the Declaration of Independence.

### JOHN L. EARLY

John Levering Early was born December 19, 1896, at Staunton, Va., the son of Charles Edward and Ida (Clark) Early, both natives of the Valley of Virginia

and both school teachers. He was graduated with honors from Staunton High School, attended Asbury College, Wilmore, Ky., was graduated with honors from Washington & Lee University (B.A. degree), and from the Law School of the University of Virginia (L.L.B. degree) where the law faculty awarded him the Order of the Coif "for distinction in the study of law." He won debating and oratorical honors at all the above colleges. He was principal of Accomac, Va., High School and served in World War I in the infantry.

Mr. Early came to Sarasota in October, 1924, after having practiced law at Welch, W. Va., and having passed the bar examinations of Virginia, West Virginia, California and Florida. He has devoted his practice largely to the practice of civil law. No judge ever ruled in his favor and was reversed by the supreme court.

He was school trustee for six years and attorney for the board of public instruction for eight years. In December, 1945, he became the first municipal judge of Sarasota. In 1934, he was elected as state representative from Sarasota County and served three successive terms, being the first man from this county ever to be re-elected to that office.

Mr. Early served on practically all the important committees of the House and sponsored many important laws. On local interest, he was the author of the law which placed the Ringling Causeway, then



JOHN L. EARLY

in bad condition, upon the responsibility of the state. He also placed funds with the school authorities with which to inaugurate vocational training in Sarasota High School.

He is a member of the American Legion, Masonic lodge, Odd Fellows, and Methodist Church. A charter member of Helping Hands, Inc., he has been its only president. He was service officer of the American Legion during the last half of World War II and handled over 600 claims of veterans and their families.

Mr. Early married Maebelle Claire Brooks, of Charlottesville, Va., a school teacher who later taught in the Sarasota public schools. Mrs. Early served as treasurer of the D.A.R. and U.D.C. and also as chairman of the Red Cross Canteen Corps during the war.

Mr. and Mrs. Early have a son, Charles Edward, who was graduated from Sarasota High School, attended Virginia Military Institute for a year, and then entered the Marine Corps April 14, 1944. He was seriously wounded in the battle of Iwo Jima and in February, 1946, was in a naval hospital, not having fully recovered from his wounds.

### DR. JOHN REGINALD SCULLY

Dr. John Reginald Scully was born in Decatur, Ill., December 5, 1885, the son of William and Elizabeth (Burns) Scully. He attended the public schools in Decatur and later attended the University of Toronto, in Toronto, Canada, from which he was graduated in 1907. He has the degree of D.V.M.

After being graduated from college, Dr. Scully taught at the Terre-Haute Veterinary College, in Terre-Haute, Ind., from 1909 to 1912. He then moved to Americus, Ga., where he practiced two years. He left there to become health officer of Waycross, Ga., which position he held until 1924 with the exception of the time he served in World War, from 1917 to 1921, going into the service as a second lieutenant in the Veterinary Corps and reaching the rank of major.

Coming to Sarasota in 1924, Dr. Scully served as health officer for both Sarasota and Manatee counties from 1925 through 1928 and as health officer, thereafter, of Sarasota County until 1935. He served twice as commissioner of public works, from 1929 through 1934 and again from 1937 through 1939. He also served as a member of the city council for three years, 1941 through 1943. He was chairman of the Sarasota Park Board in 1942 and 1943.

While commissioner of public works, Sarasota obtained vitally needed public improvements at a time when the city's credit was exhausted, because of the national depression, and when the city had a serious unemployment problem. Dr. Scully managed in various ways to obtain the essential materials for carrying on numerous projects financed in part by governmental agencies.

One of the first projects undertaken was the reconstruction of Ringling Causeway and Bridge. Later, a new bridge was built over Hudson Bayou, seawalls were constructed around the City Hall, and many



DR. JOHN REGINALD SCULLY

streets were paved—and because of Dr. Scully's ingenuity, the materials did not cost the city a cent.

Later, Dr. Scully supervised the construction of the municipal auditorium, Lido Beach Casino, and a water softening plant, and also directed the work on such projects as the extension of the water system, the development of the Sarasota Trailer Park, and numerous other badly needed improvements.

Dr. Scully's Small Animal Hospital, located on Higel Avenue near the Atlantic Coast Line Depot, has been widely praised as being one of the finest animal hospitals in the entire country.

Dr. Scully is a member of the Masonic lodge, Scottish Rite 32nd degree, the Shrine, and the Elks. He is also a member of the Church of the Redeemer. His hobbies are gardening, landscaping and farming.

On June 27, 1907, Dr. Scully was married to Edith J. Lamsey. They have two children: Dorothy Scully Bachenstose, and Marion Scully Nolan, both of Sarasota.

### RUSSELL A. CURRIN

Russell A. Currin was born May 16, 1894, in Hillsboro, Ohio, the son of John Phillips and Mary Etta (Jordan) Currin. After attending elementary schools, he studied two years at the high school in Marion, O.,



RUSSELL A. CURRIN

two years at Doane Academy, in Granville, O., and then went to Denison University.

After finishing his junior year in the university he entered the army and served 18 months, most of the time in the A.E.F. Upon being honorably discharged in 1919, he returned to Denison and was graduated with other members of the class of '18 who had been in the service.

Mr. Currin then worked three years as assistant superintendent in the gas mask production plant of Edgewood Arsenal. In 1923 he came to Sarasota because his grandmother, Mrs. Jenny Jordan of Bellefontaine, O., had been spending her winters here since 1916. She was a member of the Bellefontaine Club founded by Mr. Hubbard who was instrumental in persuading many other Ohio people to make Sarasota their winter home.

Shortly after coming here, Mr. Currin formed a partnership with Frank A. Logan to do general contracting. The partnership was continued until the death of Mr. Logan in 1937. Thereafter, Mr. Currin carried on the business personally though still under the firm name of Logan & Currin.

During the Twenties, Logan & Currin built many fine homes and commercial buildings and the firm continued to be busy long after the big building boom had passed. Included among the buildings constructed were the Terrell Apartments, Presbyterian Church, the first unit of Sarasota Hospital, Thacker & Van Gilder's

funeral home, the American Legion Coliseum, the Bailey Hall School, Radio Station WSPB, and homes for Ralph C. Caples, John Somerville, W. M. Armistead, E. B. Allen, Judge Paul C. Albritton, Clarence McKaig, and Douglas Arnest.

During World War II, Mr. Currin constructed many buildings for the government at the Sarasota Air Base, Venice Air Base, Ft. Myers Air Base, and Buckingham Field at Ft. Myers.

Mr. Currin was chairman of the Sarasota County board of public instruction, 1930-32; a member of the city council, 1934-36, and a member of the Sarasota draft board during 1944 and 1945. He is a member of Sarasota Bay Post American Legion, Masonic lodge, Phi Delta Theta fraternity, and Kiwanis Club. He has been a member of the First Baptist Church for 23 years and choir director for ten years.

On June 17, 1934, Mr. Currin was married to Frances Buchanan, who was graduated from Sarasota High School in 1923 and from the Florida State College for Women in 1927. She was librarian at Sarasota High School from 1928 to 1941. Mr. and Mrs. Currin have three children: Russell Currin, Jr., born January 10, 1935, Martha Catherine, born January 18, 1942, and Mary Frances Pamela, born March 31, 1946.

Mrs. Currin's mother, Mrs. Pamela Buchanan, brought her two children to Sarasota in 1909 from Charleston, S. C., and after the death of her husband, in 1910, built a home on Laurel Street and served the community as a nurse for more than 15 years.

### FRANK A. LOGAN

Frank A. Logan, one of Sarasota's most prominent citizens during the boom period and subsequent recession and recovery, was born in Norwich, O., October 15, 1895, the son of James W. and Caroline (Dailey) Logan.

After attending high school in Zanesville, O., he entered Denison University, in Granville, O., and was graduated with a degree of bachelor of science in 1915. He then went with the experimental department of the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co., in Akron, O., where he remained until the United States entered World War I.

Enlisting immediately after war was declared, he was assigned to the gas defense section of the Chemical Warfare division of the army. Stationed in Long Island City, L. I., he conducted experiments with gas masks and finally succeeded in perfecting a new canister which proved so effective that the army named it the Logan Canister in his honor. It was used exclusively by the army in the manufacture of hundreds of thousands of gas masks during World War I and a modification of it was used for gas masks in World War II. Because of Mr. Logan's outstanding work, he was promoted from the rank of a private and finally commissioned as a lieutenant.

After the war ended, Mr. Logan was employed by the Southern Utilities Co., predecessor of the Florida Power & Light Co., as an engineer. He was stationed



FRANK A. LOGAN

in Sanford and Lakeland. Soon afterward, however, he was urged by the army to rejoin the Chemical Warfare division as a civilian employe to build and supervise a gas mask plant at Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland. In 1924, after the plant had attained a capacity of 500 masks a day, Mr. Logan resigned to come to Sarasota and form the contracting firm of Logan & Currin in partnership with Russell A. Currin. During the years which followed, the firm built hundreds of business buildings and houses in Sarasota, as well as many other structures including the Presbyterian Church, Christian Church, the Thacker Funeral Home, and the main building of the Sarasota Hospital.

Mr. Logan took an unusually active part in civic affairs. He served two years as a member of the city council, during 1929 and 1930. In 1933 he was elected commander of the Sarasota Bay Post No. 30 of the American Legion and while in office conceived the idea of Point Welcome (see Index). In recognition of his achievements during his first term, the Legionnaires waived their by-laws prohibiting a second term and re-elected him to the office. After his term expired he was elected president of the Chamber of Commerce. He was a member of the Rotary Club and the Elks. He died on July 5, 1938.

On April 2, 1921, Mr. Logan was married to Bernice Evelyn Hilty, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George R. Hilty. Mr. and Mrs. Logan had two children:

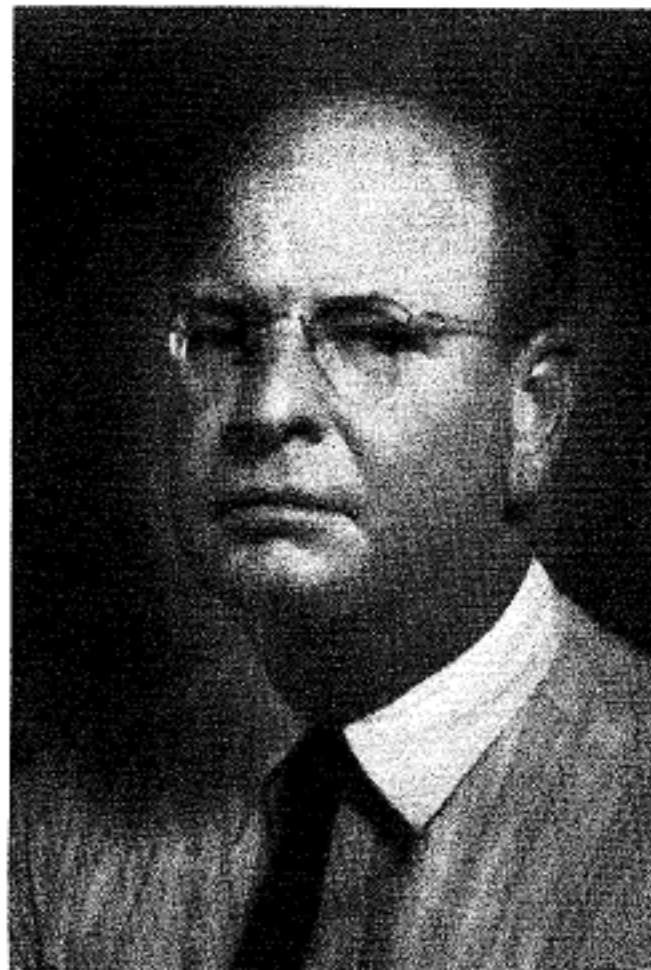
Rhea Dawn, born November 13, 1922, and Frank A., Jr., born July 22, 1924. Both were graduated from Sarasota High School. Frank enlisted in the army January 12, 1942, while attending the University of Iowa, and served three years, rising from private to staff sergeant. Dawn is now the wife of John L. McGruder, a World War II veteran who served four years. He entered the service as a private and retired as a lieutenant colonel.

Mrs. Logan is now the wife of Glen C. Whitlatch. During the past twenty years she has taken an active part in civic affairs, particularly in the Garden Club and Parent-Teachers Association.

### CLAUDE D. COLEMAN

Claude D. Coleman was born in Shellman, Ga., October 18, 1901, the son of George D. and Annie Mae (Richardson) Coleman. After being graduated from the Shellman high school, he attended the Georgia-Alabama Business College, in Macon, Ga.

Coming to Florida soon afterward, he became office manager for the Tampa branch of Morris & Co., meat packers, where he remained two years. During this period, he spent his spare time studying accounting. To complete his education, he went to Atlanta where he studied two years at the American School of Commerce, graduating in June, 1923.



CLAUDE D. COLEMAN

While attending the Atlanta school, he worked as cashier for a clothing company in that city. He left the concern in August, 1924, to come to Sarasota where he started the business of public accounting of which he is still the owner. His offices are in the Palmer National Bank building.

Mr. Coleman is a member of the Masonic lodge, the Shrine (Egypt Temple, Tampa), the Elks, and the Chamber of Commerce. He is also president of the Florida Association of Public Accountants. He is a member of the Methodist church.

On December 25, 1940, he was married to Katie B. White, of Pensacola. By a former marriage he has four children: Martha, born October 16, 1921; Claude D. Jr., born March 22, 1925; Betty Joan, born February 28, 1930 and Barba Ann, born August 30, 1933.

### THOMAS L. GLENN, JR.

Thomas L. Glenn, Jr., was born April 19, 1902, in Spartansburg, S. C., the son of Thomas L. and Ellilu (Robertson) Glenn. He was graduated in June, 1919, from the Savannah, Ga., high school, and in June, 1924, from the University of Georgia with an L.L.B. degree.

Coming to Sarasota in September, 1924, Mr. Glenn became associated with Sidney R. Perry in the practice of law. Two years later, he joined with W. Frank Evans in establishing the law firm of Evans & Glenn.

In 1928, Mr. Glenn was elected county prosecuting attorney and he served four years. In 1946, the law firm of Evans & Glenn was made the attorneys for the board of county commissioners of Sarasota County.

Shortly after coming to Sarasota, Mr. Glenn helped to organize the Sarasota Anglers Club which in 1926 held the first International Tarpon Tournament. He also served as vice-commander of the Sarasota Yacht Club and was a skipper on the racing team which won the Lipton Cup championship of the Gulf of Mexico in 1930, 1931 and 1932.

Mr. Glenn was one of the charter members of the Junior Chamber of Commerce which was organized in the fall of 1934 and served as its first full term president, taking office in January, 1935. During the following year, he led the movement to revive the Sara de Soto pageant, which attracted thousands of persons to Sarasota.

Mr. Glenn also organized and was first president of the Sarasota County Agricultural Fair Association which received a charter from the state and held fairs annually under the Ringling circus big top from 1935 until the outbreak of war.

A member of the Chamber of Commerce for many years, Mr. Glenn served one term as vice-president and has been a member of the board of directors since 1937. He also served on the executive boards under three presidents.

In 1940, Mr. Glenn was chairman of a committee of the Chamber of Commerce which successfully organized a campaign for the formation of the Sarasota County Mosquito Control District. A tax supported program for the eradication of the pests throughout



THOMAS L. GLENN, JR.

the county was carefully planned but the work was interrupted by the war. With the war ended, the program was renewed.

Mr. Glenn is a member of the Sarasota and Florida State Bar associations; has served for many years on the Court of Honor of the Boy Scouts, was chairman of the annual Red Cross drive in 1936, is a charter member and member of the board of directors of the Y.M.C.A., the Salvation Army, the Sarasota Tuberculosis Association, and served as secretary of the Civilian Defense Council during its entire existence. He also is a member of the Delta Tau Fraternity and of the Presbyterian Church.

### WILLIAM GUY SHEPARD

William Guy Shepard was born in Haywood County, Tennessee, August 29, 1894, the son of William Thomas and Alice (Newton) Shepard. In 1901, the family moved to Caruthersville, Mo., where Mr. Shepard attended the public schools.

He started working as a bookkeeper for the Wisconsin Lumber Co., at Deering, Mo. Three years later he left this concern and went with the Converse Cooperage Co., at Memphis, Tenn. After two years he was transferred to the company's Chicago office.

In 1924, Mr. Shepard came to Sarasota and organized and operated the Shepard-McGowin Lumber Co.,



WILLIAM GUY SHEPARD

which sold out to the West Coast Lumber Co. in 1926. Mr. Shepard then opened a lumber yard at Venice under the firm name of Shepard Lumber Co. The concern maintained its yards at Venice until 1929 when the offices and yards were moved to Sarasota, where they have since remained. The company now is one of the leading lumber and building material concerns on the Florida West Coast.

In 1934, Mr. Shepard played a leading role in organizing the First Federal Savings & Loan Association of Sarasota and has served as president of the institution since it opened.

Mr. Shepard is a member of Sarasota Lodge No. 147 F. & A.M., of the Egypt Temple Mystic Order of Shrine, and the Elks lodge.

On June 12, 1926, Mr. Shepard was married to Katherine Prime, daughter of one of the pioneer merchants of Sarasota, George B. Prime. Mr. Shepard has a son by a former marriage, James William, born August 21, 1918, who entered the army in December, 1943, was commissioned as a second lieutenant August 24, 1945, and was discharged after service in the Pacific area on January 23, 1946. Mrs. Shepard is active in church affairs and the A.A.U.W.

### JAMES B. GREEN

James B. Green was born in Crenshaw County, Alabama, February 28, 1882, the son of William and

Rebecca Jane (McLain) Green, descendants of old Alabama families.

He attended public schools in Crenshaw County and then studied a year at Troy State Normal College and two years in the Alabama Polytechnic Institute. He then completed a commercial course at the Eastman Business College, in Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

Upon completion of the course he started working for a plumbing and mill supply concern in Birmingham which later was absorbed by the Crane Company. Mr. Green remained with the company for two years, working in Birmingham and Savannah. During the panic of 1907, he was requested to go to Glenwood, Ala., to help liquidate a general mercantile business.

When this was completed, in 1909, he was employed in the Savannah branch office of the Hajoca Corp., plumbing goods manufacturing concern of Philadelphia. He remained with the concern for fifteen years, working his way up to the position of managership of the Macon branch. He resigned in November, 1924, to come to Sarasota where he formed a partnership with Ben Ambrose, a former customer, to enter the plumbing and heating business under the firm name of Ambrose Plumbing Co.

When the boom burst, in 1926, the partnership was dissolved upon request of Mr. Ambrose and Mr. Green carried on the business under the name of J. B. Green Plumbing & Heating Co. In 1930, a corporation was formed with Mr. Green owning 90 per cent of the stock and the remainder by Taylor Green, Sarah Jackman and W. R. Green. During the depression, the concern handled contracts in other localities, some as far away as New Hampshire and Vermont.

Mr. Green has become internationally known as a result of his development of a formula of hydrocarbon gases which can be maintained as a liquid under pressure and used for general heating and cooking purposes; also, for the development of a system whereby the fuel, known as Green's Fuel, can be used in any home or building, regardless of where located. The company which markets the fuel, Green's Fuel, Inc., is headed by Mr. Green and now ranks with the fastest growing companies in the nation. (See Index: Green's Fuel, Inc.)

For many years, Mr. Green was an active member of the Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, and fraternal organizations, but pressure of business forced him to withdraw. He still takes an active part in the local Salvation Army, of which he is secretary-treasurer; is the Florida state commander of the Sons of Confederate Veterans; is a member of the National Liquefied Petroleum Gas Association, and took an active part in organizing the Florida Association of Green's Fuel Dealers.

On June 22, 1907, Mr. Green was married to Jessie Taylor, of Savannah, Ga. Mr. and Mrs. Green have a son, Nesbit Taylor, born June 16, 1908, who is vice-president of Green's Fuel, Inc. During the war, Taylor Green served in the 1635th Engineers' Battalion, U. S. Army, from April 26, 1944, to October, 1945. On April 30, 1939, he was married to Harriet Olivia Gilliland, of Roanoke, Ala. They have three daughters:



JAMES B. GREEN

Susan, born February 13, 1940, Margaret, born June 26, 1941, and Caroline Gilliland, born June 5, 1946.

Mrs. J. B. Green is active in the auxiliaries of the First Christian Church and takes part in all church activities.

#### W. FRANK EVANS

W. Frank Evans was born at Tallahassee, Fla., June 23, 1902, the son of R. J. and Adaline (Ingerville) Evans. The family came to Florida from Florence, S. C., in 1892, and R. J. Evans became engaged in the turpentine business. Later, in 1910, he organized a life insurance company which established its home office in Jacksonville, where the family then moved.

After attending public schools in Tallahassee and Jacksonville, Frank Evans attended the University of Florida and was graduated from the law college with an L.L.B. degree in 1924.

Upon completion of his college education, Mr. Evans became associated in the practice of law with the law firm of A. H. and Roswell King, of Jacksonville. This firm opened a branch office in Sarasota and Mr. Evans came here with the firm in June, 1924. In October, 1926, he became associated with Thomas L. Glenn, Jr., in the practice of law and the partnership of Evans & Glenn was formed. In 1946 the firm of

Evans & Glenn was made the attorneys for the board of county commissioners of Sarasota County.

Since coming to Sarasota, Mr. Evans has been active in community affairs. He has served as president of the Junior Chamber of Commerce, the Whitfield Country Club, and the Kiwanis Club of Sarasota; as a director and treasurer of The Players of Sarasota and as a director of the Chamber of Commerce. He is a member of the Methodist Church, the Masons, the American Legion and the Bar Association. In college, he was a member of the Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity, Beta Phi Sigma Fraternity, Serpent Ribbon Society, "F" Club, Blue Key Honor Society, and manager of the varsity football team. His hobbies are fishing and boating.

In June, 1942, Mr. Evans was commissioned as a lieutenant in the U. S. Naval Reserve and reported for active duty in August of that year. After 42 months of active duty he was released to inactive status from the U.S.S. Midway (CVB-41) on February 14, 1946, as a lieutenant commander, and he returned to his law practice on March 1, 1946.

On November 12, 1926, Mr. Evans was married to Irene Chambers, daughter of William Patten and Julia Ann (Chambers) Chambers, of Jacksonville, Fla. Mrs. Evans is a graduate of the Florida State College for Women, at Tallahassee, and is a member of the Alpha Delta Pi Sorority. Mr. and Mrs. Evans have a son, W. Frank, Jr., born September 8, 1930. In 1946



W. FRANK EVANS

he was attending Sarasota High School. Mrs. Evans has been active in community affairs, the Methodist Church, the Founders Circle of the Garden Club, the American Red Cross, and the Sarasota Hospital.

Mr. Evans has four brothers: Dr. Thomas N. Evans and Dr. Lynwood Evans, of Jacksonville; Dr. Robert J. Evans, of Oakland, Cal., and Major A. C. Evans, U.S. Army Retired (deceased). He also has a sister, Mrs. E. W. McCullough, of St. Petersburg, Fla.

### GLOVER E. ASHBY

Glover E. Ashby was born in Hanson, Ky., May 29, 1895, the son of T. L. and Mildred (Brown) Ashby. He attended public schools in Kentucky and then entered Cumberland University, in Lebanon, Tenn. After serving a year in the army in World War I, he returned to the university and was graduated with a L.L.B. degree in 1923.

He was admitted to the bar in Tennessee and, later to the bar in Florida. He came to Sarasota in 1924 and for the following eight years worked in abstract companies, gaining a detailed knowledge of real estate in Sarasota County.

In 1933, he was appointed assistant council for the Federal Land Bank of Columbia, S. C., where he remained until 1934 when he returned to Sarasota and



GLOVER E. ASHBY

began the practice of law, with offices in the Palmer Bank building.

Mr. Ashby became associated with the office of county tax assessor in 1939 under the late J. Paul Gaines. Mrs. Gaines was appointed by the governor to serve the unexpired term of her husband and Mr. Ashby served as deputy assessor. In 1940 he was elected to the office of assessor and was re-elected in 1944 without opposition.

### MAURICE CORNISH NEILL PREW

Maurice Cornish Neill Prew was born in Lima, Peru, February 11, 1894, the son of Edward John and Nadine Camac (Neill) Prew. He was educated at Queens College, Taunton, England; Haverford School, Haverford, Pa., and the University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia, where he received a B.S. degree in mechanical engineering.

During World War I he served in the United States Signal Corps, and later he became a second lieutenant in the reserves. After the war, he became assistant factory superintendent of the England-Walton Leather Co., of Philadelphia. In 1922 he entered the security business and in 1924 became interested in Sarasota real estate. Coming here permanently in December of that year, he entered the real estate business and later the insurance business.

Mr. Prew was in no small way responsible for the growth of Sarasota. He was highly regarded and beloved by his many friends and associates both here and throughout the country and well deserved his reputation as one of Sarasota's leading citizens.

Mr. Prew participated actively in community affairs for many years. He served several terms as president of the Sarasota Board of Realtors and also of the Sarasota Insurance Exchange. He was a director of the Florida Association of Insurance Agents. He also was treasurer of the Sarasota Bay Country Club, treasurer of the Sarasota Yacht Club and a founder member of the Players of Sarasota. In addition he was a member of the American Legion and the Chamber of Commerce. In college he became a member of Sigma Tau honorary engineering fraternity, and Hexagon. He also was a member of the Merion Cricket Club of Haverford, Pa. His church affiliations were Episcopalian.

On October 12, 1920 Mr. Prew was married to Katharine Deming Roberts. Mr. and Mrs. Prew had two children: Anne Deming, now Mrs. John Francis Nealon, born February 24, 1922, and Maurice Neill, born April 19, 1923.

Mr. Prew died May 8, 1940. His widow carried on his real estate and insurance business as the Maurice C. N. Prew Agency, in addition to her work as head of Prew School, which she established in 1931 as an open-air school for boys and girls.

The Prew School has become widely known as one of the best private schools on the Florida West Coast. As a result of Mrs. Prew's efficient direction and the excellence of the teachers on her staff, she has been able to keep hundreds of children of winter residents far ahead of their classes back home.



MAURICE CORNISH NEILL PREW

In the fall of 1945 all-day classes were discontinued and the teachers now specialize in tutoring. The school, located at 250 Morrill Street, is known as the Prew School of Tutoring.

Mrs. Prew was married to Richard Heath Ludden, November 17, 1945. Mr. Ludden has joined her in the real estate and insurance business and the firm name has been changed to Prew and Ludden.

Mrs. Ludden is a member of St. Elizabeth's Chapter of the Women's Auxiliary of the Church of the Redeemer (Episcopal), and Founders' Circle of the Garden Club; captain of American Red Cross Motor Corps.

#### WILLIAM ALLEN WYNNE

William Allen Wynne was born in Thomasville, Ga., January 30, 1897, the son of William A. and Mary (Cook) Wynne. When he was a small child, his family moved to Sulphur Springs, Tex., where his father, a Presbyterian minister, became pastor of the First Presbyterian Church. His father died in Sulphur Springs in 1905 and the family moved back to Georgia.

Mr. Wynne was educated in the public schools of Sulphur Springs and Waycross, Ga., where he was graduated from high school. He then attended Meridian College, in Meridian, Miss., paying his expenses by working on the college farm the year round.

Soon after war was declared in 1917, Mr. Wynne enlisted in the navy where he served for two years. After being honorably discharged, he was employed by the U. S. Railroad Administration at Atlanta, Ga., and Washington, D. C. He remained with the administration until the end of 1923 when he returned to Atlanta and worked in a real estate office during 1924.

In December, 1924, Mr. Wynne came to Sarasota and accepted employment in the county engineer's office where he worked until November, 1926. He was then appointed deputy clerk in the office of Clerk of Circuit Court J. R. Peacock. In the general election of May, 1944, he was elected to succeed Mr. Peacock. His four-year term as clerk of the circuit court began January 1, 1945.

Mr. Wynne is a member of the Masonic lodge, the Shrine, the American Legion, and the Lions Club. He is also a member of the Presbyterian Church, in which he is chairman of the board of deacons. He has been active in Salvation Army work.

On December 27, 1927, Mr. Wynne was married to Myrtle Zetrover, of Gainesville, Fla. Mr. and Mrs. Wynne have a daughter, Dolores A., born February 1, 1929, who was graduated from Sarasota High School in 1945 and in 1946 was attending Stephens College, Columbia, Mo.



WILLIAM ALLEN WYNNE

## THE DAVIS FAMILY

John W. Davis, one of Sarasota's leading citizens for fifteen years, was born in Macon County, Georgia, November 6, 1887, the son of John Randolph and Ida Lorene Davis. After attending Georgia schools, he started in the general mercantile business in Jakin, Ga. Later, he was engaged in the saw mill business, at Jakin and Donaldson, Ga.

On October 23, 1910, he was married to Bertha Constance Minter, daughter of Berrien Constantine and Leile (O'Neil) Minter.

Mr. Davis came to Sarasota with his family in 1925 and was engaged in the grocery business until 1932, when he was elected county commissioner from District No. 1. He was re-elected three times to the board. When he took office, Sarasota County was in the depths of the depression and Mr. Davis devoted his entire time to the task of aiding the county in its program of readjustment. When he died suddenly on May 7, 1940, the Sarasota Herald declared in an editorial that the county had lost one of the most capable and trustworthy officials it ever had.

Mr. Davis was a member and director of the Sarasota County Chamber of Commerce, a director of the Sarasota Hospital Board, a member and past president of the Rotary Club, the chairman of the finance committee and a board member of the First Baptist Church, and a Mason, Shriner, and Elk. He also was a member of the Junior Order of Mechanics. He had been honored three times by being chosen chairman of the board of county commissioners.

He was survived by his widow, four sons: John Willie, Jr., killed in France January 26, 1945, while serving in the U. S. army; Philip Minter, head of the Davis Lumber Co.; Glen Randolph, with the American Express Co., and Barrien Edwin, with the Tampa Tribune; a daughter, Eugenia, now the wife of Arnot B. Wadsworth, Dade City, Fla.; his mother, now living in Leesburg, Ga.; two brothers, Allatia Westbrook Davis, of Leesburg, Ga., and S. J. Davis, of Sanford, Fla., and four sisters, Mrs. T. E. Roberts, of Donaldsonville, Ga.; Mrs. George Moreland, of Leesburg, Ga.; Mrs. T. R. Lewis, of Albany, Ga., and Mrs. C. E. McKee, of Sanford, Fla.

Philip Minter Davis, born September 2, 1914, was graduated from the Sarasota High School in 1934 and then studied at the Ringling School of Art, where he took a college preparatory course, and at Droughton's School of Commerce, in Atlanta, where he took a course in accounting.

He then worked successively for the H. & B. Lumber Co., the Frank A. Logan Co., and Logan & Currin. During the war he worked for the Cone Brothers Contracting Co., of Tampa, and was engaged in the construction of roads and army camps.

On October 1, 1944, he purchased the Independent Lumber Co., now known as the Davis Lumber Co., which has its offices, warehouses and yards on N. Orange Avenue at 18th Street. The concern handles general building materials.

Mr. Davis is a member of the Elks, Chamber of Commerce, and Florida Lumber and Mill Work Deal-



PHILIP MINTER DAVIS

ers Association, and is president of the Business Men's Bible Class of the First Baptist Church.

On July 24, 1940, Mr. Davis was married to Ruth Elizabeth Steiner, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. I. F. Steiner, of Lima, O. They have one son, Philip M. Davis II, born June 4, 1945.

## RANDOLPH CALHOUN

Randolph Calhoun was born September 17, 1901, in Marianna, Fla., the son of John M. and Mary (Richardson) Calhoun, descendants of pioneer Florida families. He was the oldest of a family of ten children.

After being graduated from Jackson County high school he studied at Stetson University in Deland, Fla., and was graduated with an L.L.B. degree in 1921. He was admitted to the practice of law in Florida in June, 1921. Later he did post graduate work at George Washington University and the American Graduate School of Diplomacy and Jurisprudence at Washington, D. C., and received the degrees of M.P.L. and L.L.M. He was admitted to practice in the Supreme Court of the United States in 1924.

Mr. Calhoun served as secretary to Senator Park Trammell in Washington from the summer of 1921 to 1923. He then practiced law in Washington until February, 1925, when he came to Sarasota and estab-



RANDOLPH CALHOUN

lished a law office which he has maintained ever since. For eight years he was an attorney for the Federal Land Bank of Columbia, S. C., and also served as attorney in this section for the general liquidator of Florida banks. In 1929 he was given a civil service rating as senior attorney. In 1934 he was a candidate for congress. Early in 1946 he served three months as assistant attorney general of the State of Florida.

For many years Mr. Calhoun was active in civic and club affairs. He served as president of the Sarasota Exchange Club and was a member of the state board of control of the Exchange Clubs of Florida. For ten years he was chairman of the advance committee of the Sunny Land Council of Boy Scouts of America. During 1945 and 1946 he was president of the Sarasota Bar Association. He has been affiliated with the First Baptist Church.

Mr. Calhoun was married December 23, 1927, to Ila Godwin, of Warm Springs, Ga. Mr. and Mrs. Calhoun have two children: John Randolph, born October 29, 1933, and Marybeth, born August 15, 1938.

#### LAMAR B. DOZIER

Lamar B. Dozier was born June 2, 1906, in Nunez, Ga., the son of William P. and Mamie (Elliott) Dozier. After being graduated from high school in Stillmore,

Ga., he attended North Georgia College, in Dahlonega, Ga. Later he studied law at Stetson University, in Deland, Fla.

In July, 1924, Mr. Dozier came to Sarasota and soon afterward was appointed county judge's clerk, which position he held until 1928 when he was appointed official circuit court reporter, and served until 1935.

Mr. Dozier began studying law while working as judge's clerk and court reporter and in 1932 he was admitted to the state bar. In 1935 he began practicing in partnership with Arthur R. Clarke under the firm name of Clarke & Dozier. Since Mr. Clarke's death in 1941, Mr. Dozier has maintained the law office under his own name.

In 1936, Mr. Dozier was elected county prosecuting attorney and he is now serving his third four-year term.

One of the charter members of the Junior Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Dozier served in 1936 as the third president of the organization and was re-elected in 1942. In 1946 he was director of the Junior Chamber and also a director of the Sarasota County Chamber of Commerce. He is a member of the Sarasota Bar Association and the First Baptist Church.

Mr. Dozier's father has been associated with the Sarasota Herald-Tribune since the paper was first started as the Sarasota Herald in 1925. He is now auditor of the newspaper.



LAMAR B. DOZIER

Lamar Dozier was married on January 20, 1939, to Millicent Bowcock, of Sarasota. They have three sons: William Bernard, born August 16, 1940; Thomas Arthur, born March 26, 1943, and John Elliott, born August 10, 1945.

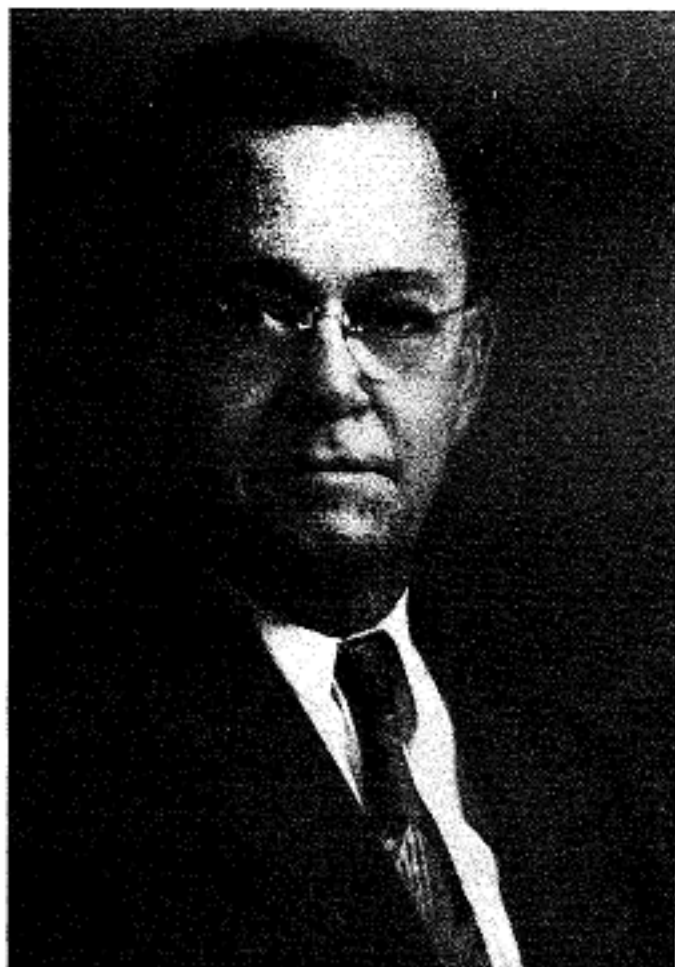
### JOHN PAUL COBB

John Paul Cobb was born in Dahlonga, Ga., February 23, 1889, the son of William Herschel and Amanda (Chitwood) Cobb. He was educated at the high school in Royston, Ga., the University School for Boys, and then attended Georgia Tech for one year.

When a youngster, while playing sandlot baseball, Mr. Cobb became widely known as a star third-baseman and outfielder and from 1907 to 1916 he played professional ball in western leagues. A brother, Ty Cobb, was famous for many years as an outstanding player in the big leagues.

In the spring of 1917, Mr. Cobb enlisted in the Marine Corps. After being trained at Paris Island, S. C., he was sent overseas where he served a year.

After being honorably discharged from the marine corps, Mr. Cobb went to Atlanta where he became superintendent of wholesale production of the Nunnally Candy Co. He remained there until 1924, when he came to Sarasota to enter the real estate business.



JOHN PAUL COBB

Since coming here Mr. Cobb has taken an active interest in civic affairs. He served as chairman of the baseball committee of the Chamber of Commerce for many years and played an active role in getting Indianapolis and, later, the Boston Red Sox to train here.

For eight years he served as a member of Sarasota County Board of Education. He is a member of the Elks Club and the American Legion. His hobbies are hunting and fishing.

On June 4, 1923, Mr. Cobb was married to Ella Rebecca Smith, of Atlanta. Mr. Cobb has one son, John Paul, Jr., born August 18, 1924. Mrs. Cobb, who was an active member of the Parent-Teacher Association, died in 1935.

### GEORGE D. LINDSAY

George D. Lindsay was born in McKeesport, Pa., March 30, 1862, the son of David G. and Janet (Nichols) Lindsay. He studied in Washington & Jefferson College and Wooster College and then took courses in theology in Western Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, and McCormack Theological Seminary, Chicago, being graduated from the latter in 1889.

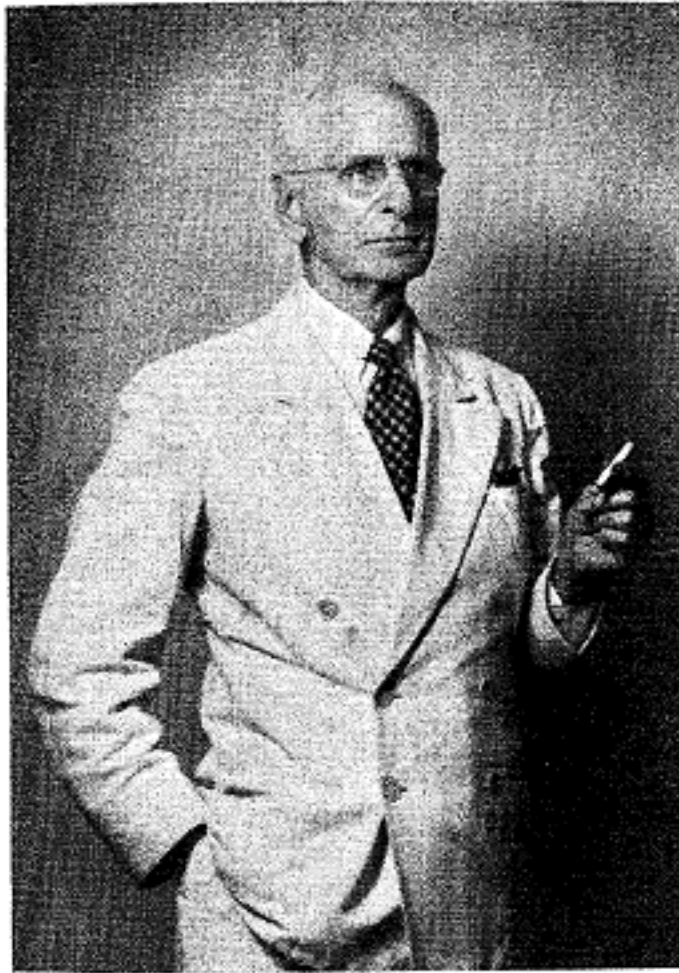
Thereafter, he was pastor of Presbyterian churches in Ionia, Mich., Galena, Ill., Oshkosh, Wis., and Greensburg, Pa., his pastorates covering the period of 1889 to 1906. From 1906 to 1911 he practiced law at Marion, Ind. In 1908, he acquired an interest in the Marion Chronicle and became sole owner of the newspaper in 1912. He served as editor for many years. Later, the publication was combined with the Leader-Tribune and he became editor emeritus of the Chronicle and the Chronicle-Tribune, the Sunday publication.

With his son, David B. Lindsay, Paul Poynter, and Edward E. Naugle, Mr. Lindsay established the Sarasota Herald in 1925. He served as editor of the Herald from 1925 to 1938 when the Herald was consolidated with the Sarasota Tribune. He continued as editor of the Sarasota Herald-Tribune until his death on Saturday, February 9, 1946. He was active until a few days before he died.

During his long and active career in the newspaper business, he was twice president of the Inland Daily Press Association, the Republican Editorial Association of Indiana, and the Hoosier State Press Association.

Nationally he was best known, perhaps, as the author of a series of non-sectarian religious editorials, in reality sermonettes, which he produced each Sunday for 30 years. Two volumes of these editorials have been printed. They were widely quoted in newspapers, religious and secular, and many pastors used them as themes for sermons.

For 21 years, Mr. Lindsay was active in the civic, political and social affairs of Sarasota and he constantly strove, in every manner possible, to make the community a better place in which to live. Kindly, generous and gentle, he was loved by everyone who knew him, and he was respected by the people of Sarasota as few other men have been.



GEORGE D. LINDSAY

Mr. Lindsay was married to Emma Bell Breed, of Pittsburgh, Pa., on July 11, 1889. Mrs. Lindsay died in 1943. Surviving children who were with him when death came were: Mrs. Gardner J. Thomas, Marion, Ind.; David B. Lindsay, publisher of the Herald-Tribune, Sarasota; Mrs. Jean L. Page, Sarasota; Mrs. Hugo C. Fischer, Boston, and Richard E. Lindsay, advertising manager of Business Girl Magazine, Dallas, Texas. A sister, Mrs. Emma L. Arthur, Wilkinsburg, Pa., 11 grandchildren and several great-grandchildren also survive him.

David B. Lindsay was a lieutenant in the Army Air Corps in World War I and a major in aviation in World War II, serving two years with Major General Claire L. Chennault's Flying Tigers in China. Richard Lindsay served as lieutenant in the Navy Air Corps in World War II.

#### FLOYD WASHINGTON VAN GILDER

Floyd Washington Van Gilder was born March 28, 1884, in Cape May County, New Jersey, the son of Washington and Allie (Hess) Van Gilder.

After attending public schools in New Jersey, Mr. Van Gilder studied at Pierce Business College and then went to Eckels College of Embalming, in Philadelphia, in 1905. Upon completion of the course, he became associated with the Oliver H. Bair Co., of Philadel-

phia, and worked with the firm as embalmer and funeral director until 1920.

Mr. Van Gilder then came to Florida and worked for Marcus Conant, in Jacksonville, as funeral director and embalmer until 1925 when he came to Sarasota and bought a half interest in the George L. Thacker funeral business, which thereafter was known as Thacker and Van Gilder, Inc. Mr. Van Gilder is now president and treasurer of the firm.

Since coming to Sarasota, Mr. Van Gilder has taken an active interest in community affairs. He has been secretary and treasurer of the Sarasota Rotary Club since 1935, is treasurer of Sunny Land Council of the Boy Scouts, is a member of the Chamber of Commerce, and has helped in collecting money in the annual drives of the Salvation Army. He is a life member of the Masonic lodge and is a member of the Elks and Moose. He is also a member of the First Methodist Church.

On October 9, 1929, Mr. Van Gilder was married to Alice Williams. Mrs. Van Gilder is an active worker in the Red Cross and is a member of the Sarasota Garden Club and Woman's Club. They have three children: Lyle, born May 9, 1917, who is now the wife of Dale Stockbridge, who served five years in the U. S. Army during World War II; Thomas S. Jerkins, born April 20, 1920, and Floyd Dirk Van Gilder, born September 7, 1925.



FLOYD WASHINGTON VAN GILDER

## THE THOUREZ FAMILY

The Thourez family, five members of which became actively identified with Sarasota affairs, came to the United States from France at the turn of the century in search of greater opportunities. The family included Mr. and Mrs. Jean Claude Thourez, three sons, Hipolyte, Vital and Joseph, and two daughters, Reine and Louise.

The morning after arrival in New York, the father was found in his room accidentally asphyxiated. He had always urged his children to work for each other's interest and, upon the death of the father, Hipolyte, then in his twenties, assumed the responsibilities for taking care of the family.

Various business connections caused the family to live in many states. In the meantime, they studied their chosen trade, photography, and, a few years later, settled in Biloxi, Miss. where they owned a studio for two years. Business interests then required their return to France and Algeria where they established themselves. However, they soon decided to return to America.

Preferring a warm climate, they came to Florida in 1912 and had studios in Tarpon Springs and Tampa. They disposed of these at the start of World War I and started a new studio at Hopewell, Va., where they became interested in the motion picture industry. With the aid of local talent, they produced



REINE THOUREZ

small plays for the entertainment of soldiers at Camp Lee and workers at the powder plant.

As a result of this work, Louise's husband, J. C. Smith, was appointed by Fox News as news photographer to cover North Africa. She went with him as interpreter. Hipolyte soon joined them and when their contract ended, they organized an expedition to West Africa with headquarters at Dakar, Senegal. There they produced a film depicting the tse-tse fly and sleeping sickness. This film was presented to the Academy of Medicine in Paris to be used in the study of the disease.

Returning to America after two years in the African jungles, Mr. Thourez and Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Smith brought with them over 20,000 feet of wild life film which they sold to the Chester Outings Co. But before the film could be produced, it was lost in the fire which destroyed the newly-built Chester Studio in Hollywood, Cal.

Following this disaster, the Thourez brothers and sisters worked in movie studios until Hipolyte's health caused them to return to Florida which they were convinced had the best climate in the nation. They arrived in Sarasota in the spring of 1925 and decided to make it their permanent home. The boom was on and no house was available. They bought a homesite but labor was scarce. So they decided to build a house themselves. It was finished in less than two months and has been their home ever since.

They then established the Excel Studios, now one of the oldest business establishments of Sarasota. Having faith in the future of the city, even during the years of depression, the Thourez remained here and their concern continued to make steady progress.

Vital Thourez died suddenly in 1929. The others kept on working under the leadership of Hipolyte. When he died, in May, 1934, Joseph, Reine and Louise continued to operate the studios. They now own their business on Main Street and other properties, proving that their faith in the community was justified.

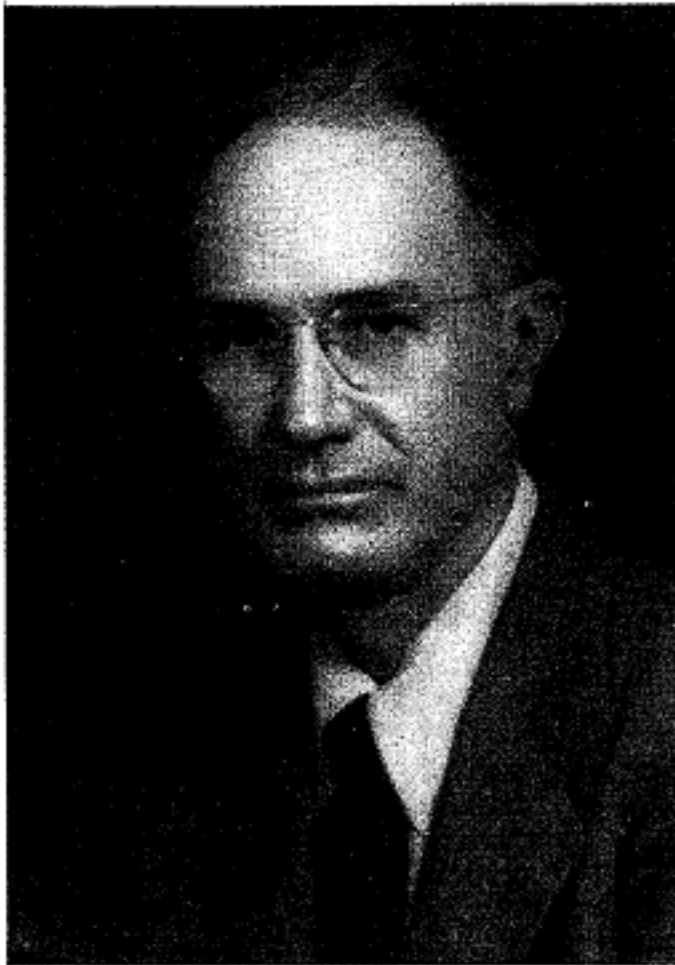
The Thourez believe ardently in love among all nations. They love America and its institutions; they never lost their faith in the future of France, and were ardent supporters of General de Gaulle, Miss Reine Thourez being Florida state president of France Forever.

Mrs. Louise Smith is now the wife of Charles Scotty. She is in charge of the Studios and has become widely known as a portraitist.

## JOHN IRVIN WALDEN

John Irvin Walden was born in Plant City, Fla., August 15, 1892, the son of Reuben Y. and Nannie (Branch) Walden. His grandfather, Sylvester Walden, moved from Georgia to Turkey Creek, Florida, in 1867 as a missionary for the Baptist Church. His grandfather on his mother's side, owned Silver Springs at about the time of the War Between the States.

Mr. Walden attended public schools and the Law School at John B. Stetson University, at DeLand, Fla.



J. IRVIN WALDEN

In 1917, he was assistant chief clerk of the House of Representatives, in Tallahassee. During World War I, he served in the navy. From June, 1919, to January, 1925, he was county judge of DeSoto County, Fla.

Mr. Walden then came to Sarasota and he has continued to practice law ever since. Since June, 1942, he has been secretary-treasurer of the State Democratic Executive Committee. He is a member of the American Legion and the Baptist Church. His main hobby is fishing.

On November 6, 1920, Mr. Walden was married to Emma Louise Daugherty. His stepdaughter, Mrs. Emma Ruth Grace, has three children: Shirley Jean, Joseph and Nancy.

### ROY H. LOPSHIRE

Roy H. Lopshire was born on a farm in Allen County, Indiana, May 26, 1884. He was educated in the elementary and high schools of Fort Wayne, Ind. After leaving school, he helped his father manage a farm near Ft. Wayne and in 1905 he was employed by the Ft. Wayne branch of the General Electric Co.

He remained with this concern until 1910, starting in the wiring department and later working in the testing department. He then went with a large

utility company of Chicago which owned plants throughout the northwest and during the next six years he worked for the concern in Montana, Idaho, Washington and North Dakota.

Mr. Lopshire for many years was an ardent ball player, starting on sandlot and high school teams and later playing shortstop and centerfield for the Kalispell team in the Montana State League and the Minot team in the North Dakota League. He also played semi-pro football for a number of years.

In 1916, Mr. Lopshire returned to Ft. Wayne and went into the real estate business. He continued as a realtor after coming to Sarasota in September, 1925, and has remained in the business ever since. He became a member of the Realty Board in Ft. Wayne in 1916 and has also been a member of the Sarasota Real Estate Board for many years, serving as president of the organization in 1942-43.

He is a member of the Lions Club, the Elks, and the Chamber of Commerce. He served as president of the Lions Club in 1944-45.

In 1931, Mr. Lopshire was chairman of the Tourist Park Committee of the Chamber of Commerce. While he headed the committee the promotion work and general layout for the present City Trailer Park was done.

On April 22, 1919, Mr. Lopshire was married to Dorothy A. DeLeGrange, of Ft. Wayne, Ind. Mr.



ROY H. LOPSHIRE

and Mrs. Lopshire have one son, Robert M. born April 14, 1927, who served in the coast guard in the South Pacific after being graduated from Sarasota High School in 1944.

### BYRD DOUGLAS PEARSON

Byrd Douglas Pearson was born in Chattanooga, Tenn., March 5, 1910, the son of Clem Bonner and Willie Etta (Williamson) Pearson, members of old Tennessee families.

He was educated in the elementary school of Fayetteville, Tenn., and in Sarasota High School.

His father came to Sarasota with his family in 1925 and was a member of the city police force until 1932 when he was elected sheriff of Sarasota County. He served a four-year term and was re-elected in 1936. He was forced to retire from the office in 1939 because of ill health.

After finishing school, Byrd Douglas Pearson worked as an automobile and insurance salesman for a number of years and learned to become an airplane pilot. In 1938, he started working as a deputy sheriff under his father and on May 26, 1939, was appointed by Governor Fred P. Cone to fill his father's unexpired term. He was elected to the office in 1940 and re-elected in 1944.



BYRD DOUGLAS PEARSON

Sheriff Pearson is one of the owners of Rocking Chair Ranch, south of Bee Ridge. His hobbies are stock raising and hunting.

He is a member of the Lions Club, the Elks Club and the I.O.O.F. He is also a member of the Christian Church.

On April 18, 1933, Sheriff Pearson was married to Lena Katherine Brossard, of Fayetteville, Tenn. They have two children: Byrd Douglas, Jr., born November 9, 1934 and Judith, born March 16, 1936.

### TAYLOR CARVER SCOTT

Taylor Carver Scott was born in Hodgenville, Ky., October 3, 1898, the son of John N. and Emma (Moss) Scott. He was educated in the public schools at Hodgenville and Bradenton, Fla., where his family moved in 1911.

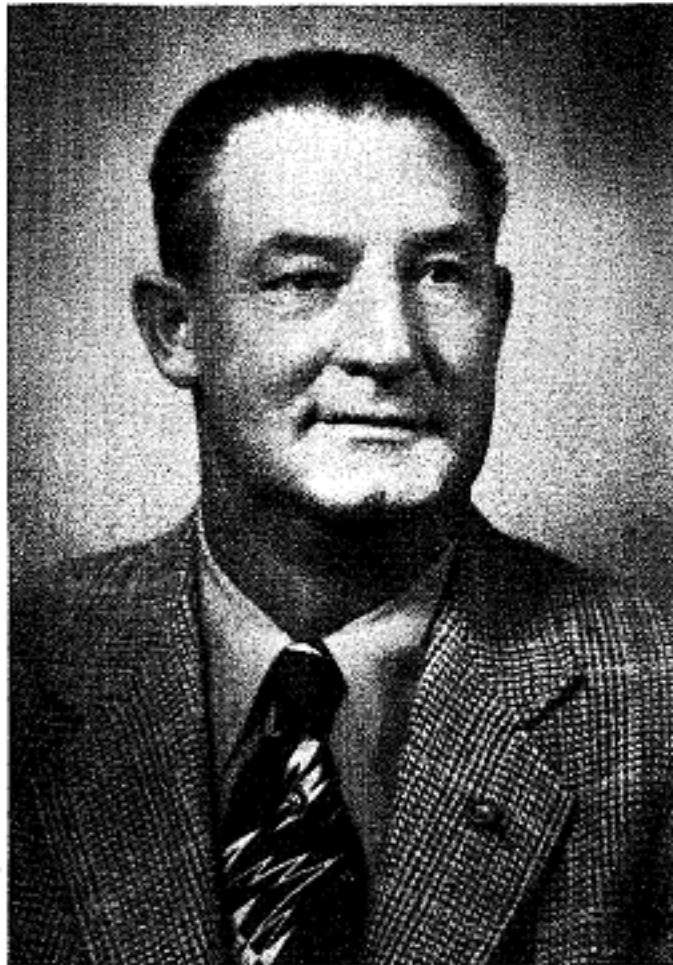
While attending Bradenton High School, Mr. Scott ran away from home and joined the naval militia when 17 years old. His parents secured his release and he then joined the Florida National Guard and was inducted into the federal service in August, 1917, being sent to Camp Wheeler, Ga., which then was just being opened. There he joined Co. E, 124th Inf., of the 31st Division. He was sent overseas and arrived in France on June 20, 1918, at which time he was transferred to Co. A, 102nd Inf., of the 26th Division. On July 22 he was captured by the Germans at Epids, during the battle of Chateau Thierry, and was held prisoner until December 8.

After the war, Mr. Scott returned to Bradenton and was employed by the Peninsular Telephone Co., at the Bradenton exchange, where he had worked after school and on Saturdays from September 1, 1915, until he entered the service. He has remained with the company ever since and has been manager of the Sarasota and Venice exchanges since January, 1925.

Since coming to Sarasota, Mr. Scott has been active in many civic organizations and has served on many safety and development committees. He is a member of the Chamber of Commerce, American Legion, Rotary Club, and Anglers Club. His hobbies are fishing and hunting.

On March 23, 1920, Mr. Scott was married to Edith Harper Harris, the granddaughter of Capt. Waddie and Harriet (Harper) Bacon, one of the pioneer families of the Land of Sarasota. Mr. and Mrs. Bacon came here from Tupelo, Miss., in 1876, with eight children, traveling all the way by ox cart. They homesteaded on the bayfront at South Creek, living for months in a palmetto-thatched log cabin. When Sarasota was laid out and its development started by the Florida Mortgage & Investment Co., the Bacon family moved into "town" where the younger children could go to school.

Mrs. Scott's mother, whose maiden name was Grace Harper Bacon, was married to Jasper B. Harris on December 22, 1886, in the first wedding ceremony performed in the new town of Sarasota.



TAYLOR CARVER SCOTT

Mr. and Mrs. Scott had three sons: Taylor Carver, Jr., born December 30, 1920; Jasper Nelson, born May 29, 1923, and Thomas Edmund, born November 17, 1928. Jasper Nelson, who became a staff sergeant in the Army Air Corps, was reported missing in action near Suichwan, China, January 20, 1945. The War Department estimated date of death as January 21, 1945. Mr. and Mrs. Scott are members of the Methodist Church.

#### LEE O. RHODES

Lee O. Rhodes was born on a farm in Santa Rosa County, Florida, November 24, 1904, the son of John W. and Della (Dixon) Rhodes, descendants of pioneer Florida families.

While attending grammar school, he worked on his father's farm. When 19 years old, he got his first "paying" job in a planter mill at Brewton, Ala., earning 11 cents an hour and working ten hours a day. He returned to Florida in 1924 and after working a short time for a saw mill in Okeechobee he came to Sarasota on January 25, 1925, and started working as a cook on John Ringling's steamer "Success" which was being used for bringing tile down the bay from Tampa for the Ringling mansion and also in the development of Ringling Isles.

In August, 1926, Mr. Rhodes was employed by J. H. Lord as custodian of the First Bank & Trust Co. building, now known as the Palmer Bank building. He remained there a year.

On July 5, 1927, Mr. Rhodes was married to Jane Garrett, daughter of Jerry and Elizabeth (Griffith) Garrett, of Baker, Fla.

Returning to Sarasota after a honeymoon trip, Mr. Rhodes secured a job as a driver of a bakery truck for a small local bakery. Mrs. Rhodes also worked for the bakery. They remained with the bakery until the summer of 1928 when Mr. Rhodes went with Mr. and Mrs. Inghram as "star chef" in the Inghram's "Hamburger Hotel" on the Triangle, a tiny place which was noted only for the quality of sandwiches it sold.

In September, 1929, Mr. Rhodes bought the sandwich shop for \$800, with a down payment of \$200. In order to obtain money needed to buy new dishes and equipment, he borrowed money with his automobile as security.

Mr. and Mrs. Rhodes worked together in making the Hamburger Hotel a real success, despite the facts that the nation was then on the downward trend as the result of the crash of the stock market in the fall of 1929. By 1931 they had accumulated enough capital to build the "Blue Moon" in the 400 block of Main Street. After this was established, they sold the Hamburger Hotel for \$2500.



LEE O. RHODES

Now well established in the restaurant business, Mr. Rhodes built the Silver Coffee Cup in 1935 and operated it until 1939. In 1938, he opened the Palm Cafeteria in Cummer's Arcade; in 1939, he opened another Palm Cafeteria in Clearwater; in 1940, he bought Martin's Restaurant at Main and Pineapple Streets which he converted into a cafeteria in 1941.

In 1942, he bought a building at 510 Tampa Street, in Tampa, and established a third Palm Cafeteria which soon was doing a business of \$250,000 a year. He sold the entire Tampa property in December, 1944.

In 1946, Mr. Rhodes employed 120 persons in his cafeterias in Sarasota and Clearwater and thousands of persons eat in his places daily, attracted by the quality of the food served. Mr. Rhodes also owns and operates a 45-acre citrus grove in Hillsborough County and in January, 1946, became the owner of the business block on N. Pineapple Avenue which was used for years as the main office of the Palmer Corporation.

Mr. and Mrs. Rhodes have a daughter, Mona Lee, born August 1, 1935.

Mr. Rhodes is a member of Sarasota Lodge No. 147 F. & A. M., of Egypt Temple, Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, and of the Elks Lodge. He is an ardent golfer and loves outdoor life. Both Mr. and Mrs. Rhodes are members of the First Baptist Church.



ROGER V. FLORY

### ROGER V. FLORY

Roger V. Flory came to Sarasota in March, 1925, and was greatly impressed with the genial manner of its people, the gentleness of its climate, the natural beauty of its setting and the possibilities of its growth and development.

So impressed was he that he returned to his native Chicago, closed out his law office and returned to Sarasota to enter the real estate business and make Sarasota his permanent home.

Mr. Flory has been continuously active in the real estate business here ever since and has taken an active interest in all civic affairs that might tend to develop Sarasota into the city he envisioned in 1925.

He has served as president of the Board of Realtors three times; vice-president of the Florida Association of Realtors; president of the Chamber of Commerce, having served as a member of the board of directors for ten years; commander of Sarasota Bay Post No. 30, The American Legion; Sarasota's representative on the Republican State Executive Committee and many important civic committees.

In 1928 he produced the Sarasota's Visitors' Guide, an annual publication designed to attract visitors to Sarasota through illustration and intimate description. 250,000 copies of the 48-page publication have been distributed locally and by mail through the Chamber of Commerce, resulting in many additional tourists and permanent residents for Sarasota. This is a hobby growing out of his ex-

perience in his early life as a compositor, which vocation he pursued to help carry college expenses. He holds an Honorable Withdrawal Card from International Typographical Union No. 16.

Roger V. Flory was born at Downer's Grove, near Chicago, Ill., the son of Don Flory and Blanche A. Burgner, M. D., formerly Blanche A. Flory, (nee Bennett). His early education was in the public schools of Chicago. He was graduated from Valparaiso University in 1913 with a B. S. degree, attended Northwestern University Law School two years and was graduated from Yale Law School, 1917, L. L. B.

He served 17 months in World War I, joining the navy as seaman 2nd. class and later was commissioned as an ensign.

After the war he practiced law in Chicago for seven years until 1925 when he refused an appointment as assistant U. S. district attorney and came here to live.

In Chicago he was a member of the Chicago Bar Association; Lake Shore Athletic Club; Chicago Yacht Club; Hamilton Club; the Christian Church, A.F. and A.M. He organized and was the first Commander of Austin Post No. 52 and was director of organization of the American Legion for Chicago. He is the proud possessor of a certificate from the Department of Illinois in which he is "recognized and honored as

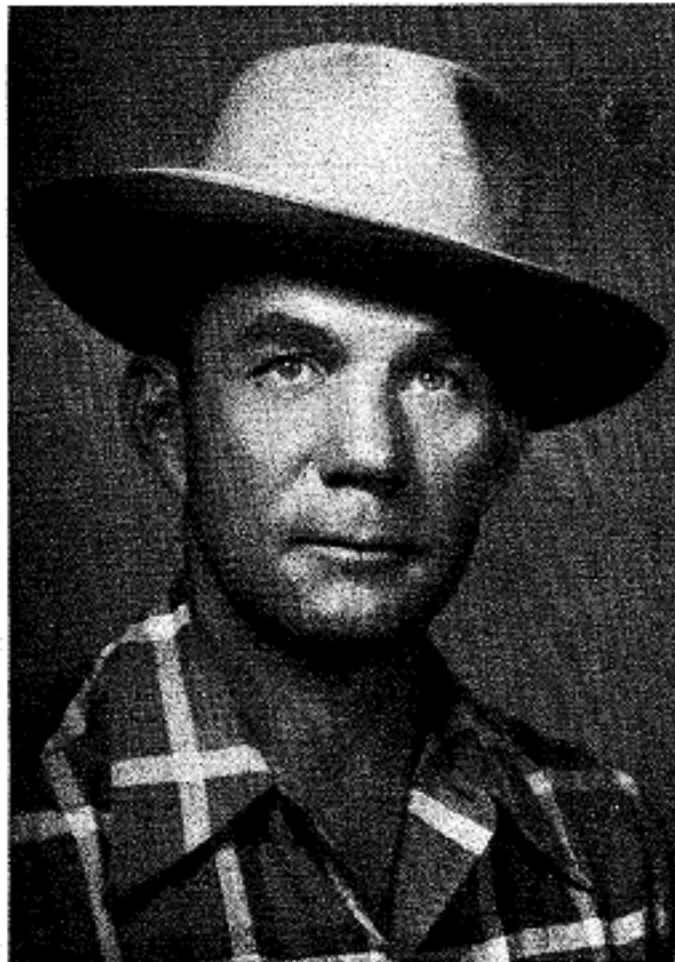
one of that little band of forward looking citizens who attended the first caucus of World War Veterans in St. Louis in May, 1919, and there organized "The American Legion" and is designated as a "Founder of The American Legion." The Founders Medal was presented to him at the Armistice Day services in Sarasota in 1941.

During his administration as president of the Sarasota County Chamber of Commerce in 1938 the campaign to build and finance Lido Beach Casino was inaugurated and developed to the stage of actual construction.

Mr. Flory in 1946 was a member of the governing boards of the American Red Cross, the American Legion, Chamber of Commerce, Service Men's Club, Florida Association of Realtors and was president of the Sarasota Board of Realtors.

### CHARLTON HAINES DOWNS

Charlton Haines Downs was born July 2, 1900, in Long Valley, N. J., the son of Archibald Price and Adalaide (Beatty) Downs. In 1917, he was graduated from the Roxbury high school of Succasunna, N. J., and soon afterward went to work in the main office of the Du Pont Corporation in Wilmington, Del.



CHARLTON HAINES DOWNS

Later he traveled for Du Pont in North Carolina and Florida, selling paints and varnishes. In March, 1925, he opened a paint store on Main Street with the first full carload of paint ever to arrive in Sarasota. Later, he opened stores in Bradenton and Venice. Until September, 1945, when he opened a large new store at 160 Sixth Street, he was widely known as the oldest merchant on Main Street.

In 1935, Mr. Downs started in the cattle business as co-owner of the O-Bar-O Ranch in the eastern part of the country. Shortly afterward he brought the first purebred Brahma bull to Sarasota County. The ranch is now widely known as one of the most successful in this section of Florida.

Mr. Downs has been active in all community affairs since coming to Sarasota and is a member of the Kiwanis Club and the Masonic and Elks lodges.

On October 10, 1927, Mr. Downs was married to Leonora Draper, of Hopkinsville, Ky. Mr. and Mrs. Downs have one son, Charlton Haines, Jr., born March 20, 1931.

### CLARENCE LESLIE MCKAIG

Clarence Leslie McKaig was born in Normandy, Tenn., January 9, 1899, the son of James Sullinger and Mollie (Morrow) McKaig. His father was engaged in the farming and logging business until his death in 1902.

Mr. McKaig was educated in the public schools of Bedford County, Tenn., and at the Brandon Training School, in Shelbyville, Tenn. He then enrolled in Vanderbilt University, in Nashville and was graduated with an L. L. B. degree in June, 1924. He was admitted to the Tennessee state bar on February 13, 1924, before he was graduated from Vanderbilt.

While attending the university, Mr. McKaig earned enough money to complete his education by working in the United States postoffice in Nashville, Tenn.

He came to Sarasota January 1, 1925, was admitted to the Florida state bar on May 5, 1925, and immediately began practicing law. He served as city attorney from January 1, 1941, to January 1, 1946, when he resigned and was appointed by the new city commission as a member of their advisory board.

Mr. McKaig is a director of the Palmer National Bank & Trust Co. of Sarasota.

He has been active in civic affairs ever since coming to Sarasota. He is a member of the board of directors of the Sarasota County Chapter of the American Red Cross; has served for many years on various committees of the Chamber of Commerce, and is chairman of the board of stewards of the First Methodist Church. He is a member of the Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity, the Masonic lodge, and of the Rotary Club. He is also a member of the American Legion, having served a brief period in the army during World War I.



CLARENCE LESLIE MCKAIG

On September 19, 1928, Mr. McKaig was married to Alice Funkhouser, daughter of Joel and Martha (McDonald) Funkhouser, of Plattsburg, Mo. Mrs. McKaig attended Ward-Belmont College, in Nashville, Tenn., and since coming to Sarasota has been active in women's affairs, belonging to the Woman's Club, the American Legion Auxiliary, and the Garden Club. During part of World War II she was chairman of the Camp and Hospital committee of the Red Cross and is now vice-chairman of the chapter.

### JOHN FITE ROBERTSON

John Fite Robertson, the only surviving child of Nathan Glenn and Matilda (Fite) Robertson, was born at Lebanon, Tenn., June 9, 1894, and named for his grandfather, Col. John A. Fite, 7th Tennessee Infantry, C. S. A.

After attending the public schools at Lebanon, he entered Castle Heights Preparatory School (later Castle Heights Military Academy), in September, 1908, and graduated in June, 1911. He then studied three years at Cumberland University, at Lebanon, and a year and a half at the University of Virginia. He then entered the law department of Cumberland University and was graduated in January, 1917. He is a member of Kappa Sigma fraternity and Sigma Nu Phi legal fraternity.

He was admitted to the bar of Tennessee March 2, 1917, and formed, with his father, the law firm of Robertson & Robertson, and practiced until the United States entered World War I.

Upon the raising of a portion of a volunteer company, he was commissioned a second lieutenant of infantry and assigned to Co. B, 2nd Tenn. Inf. He was inducted into the federal service August 6, 1917. Trained at Camp Sevier, S. C. Transferred, in November, to 115th Field Artillery, 30th Div., and was assigned to Battery D. He served overseas from June 4, 1918, to March 28, 1919. He commanded Battery D, 115th F. A. in St. Mihiel and Argonne. Promoted to captain February 23, 1919, and assigned as adjutant of 115th F. A. Discharged at Ft. Oglethorpe, Ga., April 14, 1919. He then returned to Lebanon, and re-entered the practice of law.

On June 23, 1920, he was married to Miss Martha Lynne Buchanan, daughter of Dr. I. W. P. Buchanan (founder of Castle Heights Preparatory School) and Willie (Elkin) Buchanan. Of this union, two children were born: 1st Lt. John Fite Robertson, Jr., A. S. N. 0469716 who died July 11, 1944 (See above), and 1st Lieut. William E. Robertson, ASN 0-554163, Co. F, 346th Inf., 87th Div., who fought in the Saar Basin, the Belgium Bulge and in Germany where he was wounded and hospitalized. He was decorated with the Bronze Star for gallantry in action.



JOHN FITE ROBERTSON

Mr. Robertson was admitted to the bar of Florida in March, 1925, and, upon moving to Sarasota in April, 1925, became a member of the firm of Gardenhire, Robertson, Lea & Robertson with offices in Sarasota and Bradenton. The firm was dissolved the following year and the firm of N. G. and John Fite Robertson was immediately formed and continued until the death of Mr. N. G. Robertson February 18, 1941, at Sarasota. Actively engaged in the practice of law since moving to Florida.

Mr. Robertson is a member of the American and Florida State bar associations, and president of the bar of the 12th judicial circuit. He is a steward and trustee of the First Methodist Church. He was a delegate from Tennessee to the American Legion caucus at St. Louis in 1919 with continuous membership since. Organized and was past commander Clyde O. Bratten Post No. 15, of Lebanon, and past commander Sarasota Bay Post No. 30.

During World War II, and later, Mr. Robertson served as member of Sarasota County Selective Service Board No. 1. He is a member of the Sarasota City and County Welfare Board, Sarasota Library Board, and Service Men's Club Board.

#### LIEUT. JOHN FITE ROBERTSON, JR.

1st. Lieut. John Fite Robertson, Jr., was born November 26, 1921, at Lebanon, Tenn., the son of John Fite and Martha Lynne (Buchanan) Robertson. He attended grammar school and junior high in Sarasota and entered Castle Heights Military Academy, at Lebanon, in September, 1936, and was graduated June, 1940. He entered Davidson College, in Davidson, N. C., September, 1940, and completed two years' work. He attended summer school at the University of Florida in 1942.

During the summer of 1938, he attended the R. O. T. C. at Ft. McClellan, Ala., and when 18 received certificate of qualification for commission in O. R. C. effective upon becoming 21 or upon outbreak of war. He was commissioned 2nd Lt. of Inf., O. R. C., spring of 1942.

After training at Camp Wheeler, he proceeded through camps in N. C., Pa., and N. J. and sailed overseas April, 1943, landing in Africa. After further training there he was assigned to 135th Inf., 34th Div., 5th Army. Landing at Salerno, he fought at three crossings of Volturno River, Cassino, Anzio. He suffered a broken leg on Anzio and was hospitalized at Naples for two months, in the spring of 1944. He was promoted to a 1st lieutenancy in April, 1944.

Going back into action about June 16, he was placed in command of Co. A, 135th Inf., which command he held until he was fatally wounded near Celina July 1, 1944, while defending a strategic hill position against counter-attack, and died near there July 11. He was buried near Fallonica in American Cemetery.

He was cited for gallantry in action against the enemy on June 30 and July 1 near Celina. Decora-

tions: Silver Star and Purple Heart. Awards: Combat Infantryman's Badge and Distinguished United Citation with two clusters. Campaign ribbons: American Theatre of Operations, European Theatre of Operations with four battle stars and one bronze arrow head; victory ribbon. (See Index).

#### JAMES D. HARMON, JR.

James D. Harmon, Jr., was born October 11, 1902, in Columbia, Tenn., the son of James D. and Ellen Jane (Ragan) Harmon, descendants of old Tennessee families.

Mr. Harmon was educated in the Columbia public schools and later attended the Commercial Business College of Columbia. After leaving school he began wholesaling periodicals in conjunction with a retail cigar and magazine business. After a brief stay in Sarasota in the fall of 1925, he sold his business interests in Columbia and returned to Sarasota in February, 1926, and for more than a year was connected with the advertising department of the Sarasota Times.

In 1927, Mr. Harmon re-entered the retail cigar business and later was associated with his brother,



JAMES D. HARMON, JR.

C. E. Harmon, in the brokerage business in Tampa. In 1937 he entered the men's clothing and furnishings business with his brother, W. M. Harmon. The firm, known as Harmon's, is located at 252 Main Street and is one of the leading stores in Sarasota.

Mr. Harmon is a member of the board of directors of the Kiwanis Club, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Retail Merchants Association. He is also a member of the Elks and the Junior Chamber of Commerce. He is affiliated with the First Christian Church.

On May 15, 1926, Mr. Harmon was married to Elsie Malinda Porter, of Columbia, Tenn. They have two daughters, Lelia Ann, born January 16, 1931, and Lou Ellen, born October 12, 1932. Mrs. Harmon has been active in church and social welfare work and Garden Circles.

### WILLIAM McCOY HARMON

William McCoy Harmon was born September 17, 1914, in Columbia, Tenn., the son of James D. and Ellen Jane (Ragan) Harmon. He came to Sarasota in 1925 and was educated in the public schools, being graduated from Sarasota High School in 1932. Later he attended Ringling College.

During 1935 and 1936, he owned and operated a tire sales and service business known as Harmon's



WILLIAM McCOY HARMON

Service. In 1937, he became associated with his brother, James D. Harmon, Jr., in the men's clothing and furnishings business under the firm name of Harmon's.

Mr. Harmon has been active in Junior Chamber of Commerce work, having served as president one year and as a member of the board of directors for three years. He is a member of the Episcopal Church and is a member of the vestry. He also served as chairman on various committees in connection with the Sara de Soto pageants. He is a member of the Rotary International, Elks, American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Chamber of Commerce, and the Retail Merchants Association, of which he has served as a member of the board of directors.

Always keenly interested in outdoor sports, Mr. Harmon has made a hobby of tennis, golf, fishing, and swimming.

In January, 1943, he enlisted in the navy and was made an athletic director with a rank of chief petty officer. He served two years in Trinidad and was honorably discharged in October, 1945.

On November 14, 1937, Mr. Harmon was married to Dorothy Vivianne Graham who has been an active church worker and has participated in community social affairs.

### CLARENCE JORDAN STOKES

Clarence Jordan Stokes was born in Moultrie, Ga., December 9, 1901, the son of Robert Lee and Margie (Fish) Stokes. After attending elementary schools, he studied at Emory University, in Atlanta, Ga., and at Mercer University, in Macon, Ga.

From 1922 to 1925 he was part owner and assistant manager of R. L. Stokes and Sons Co., general insurance, of Moultrie, Ga., and of the South Georgia Investment Co., automobile finance, of the same city.

Coming to Sarasota in March, 1925, Mr. Stokes became part owner and manager of the insurance department of Brown & Crist, Inc., real estate and insurance brokers. In 1929, he acquired a larger interest in the firm and its name was changed to Brown & Stokes, Inc. In 1935, he obtained complete ownership of the firm and since then the business has been operated as a proprietorship under the trade name of Brown & Stokes.

In February, 1943, he received a commission as a lieutenant in the United States Naval Reserve and served until October 8, 1945, when he was honorably discharged with the rank of lieutenant commander.

On March 19, 1924, Mr. Stokes was married to Elsie Bailey Turnbull, a descendent of a family which has figured greatly in the history of Florida. While her husband was in the navy, Mrs. Stokes took over the active management of the business of Brown & Stokes.

Mr. Stokes is a member of the Sarasota City Commission, the Rotary Club, the Sarasota Bay Country



CLARENCE JORDAN STOKES

Club, the Bobby Jones Golf Club, Sarasota Insurance Exchange, Sarasota Realty Board, and the Sarasota County Chamber of Commerce. He is an Episcopalian.

Mrs. Stokes is a founder member and a member of the board of directors of the Players from 1930 to 1942. She is active in Church School, Altar Guild and Woman's Auxiliary of the Episcopal Church, and served as secretary of the board of directors of the Community Chest, and a member of the board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce.

### JOHN JOSEPH WILLIAMS, JR.

John Joseph Williams, Jr., was born in Memphis, Tenn., August 4, 1886, the son of John Joseph and Mattie (Chatham) Williams, members of pioneer Tennessee families.

After attending public schools he was graduated from the University of Virginia with a B. A. degree in 1907 and with an L. L. B. degree in 1909. On July 9, 1909, he was admitted to the bar in Tennessee and practiced in Memphis until January, 1925.

When Mr. Williams first came to Sarasota he had no intention of remaining but he liked the city so well that he decided to make it his permanent home. He was admitted to the Florida bar in the fall of 1925 and joined Sidney R. Perry in establishing the law

firm of Perry & Williams. This association continued until Mr. Perry's death in August, 1927.

Several months later, Mr. Williams formed a partnership with Judge F. W. Dart. Judge Dart died in August, 1937, and his son, Francis C. Dart, then came into the firm which was continued under the name of Williams & Dart.

Mr. Williams served as city attorney during 1933 and 1934, and later from 1938 through 1940.

Mr. Williams was instrumental in the organization of the Venice-Nokomis Bank, at Venice, the First Federal Savings & Loan Association of Sarasota, and the Sarasota State Bank. He is a member of the board of directors and the attorney for the three institutions. He also was responsible for the consolidation of the Abstract Company of Sarasota and the State Abstract & Title Co., and has served as the first president of the consolidated company.

Mr. Williams is a Master Mason, a Knight Templar, a 32nd degree Mason, and a member of the Shrine. He also is a member of the Elks Lodge and the Kiwanis Club, of which he is one of its past presidents. He has served on the board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce in which he also had served on many committees. He has served on the board of directors of the Sarasota Youth Center and is a member of the advisory board of the Salvation Army.



JOHN JOSEPH WILLIAMS, JR.

On April 17, 1917, Mr. Williams was married to Hattie Moody, daughter of Thomas Edwards and Margaret (Morison) Moody, of Grenada, Miss. Mr. and Mrs. Williams have four children: Margaret W., wife of W. C. Fitch, of Jacksonville, Fla.; Charlotte W., wife of Davis Parker, of Decatur, Ga.; Ridley W., wife of J. A. McGregor, of Worton, Md., and John Joseph, IV, who in 1946 was serving in the United States army of occupation in Germany.

Mr. and Mrs. Williams have been members of the First Presbyterian Church for many years. Mr. Williams is now an elder in the church and a member of the board of trustees.

### ARTHUR E. ESTHUS

Arthur E. Esthus was born in Chicago, Ill., October 13, 1894, the son of George and Emelie (Engen) Esthus. He was educated in the public schools of Chicago and of Mjondalen, Norway, where he lived several years when his parents returned for visits to their native land. He later studied at Northwestern Business College and Lewis Institute, in Chicago.

In 1912, Mr. Esthus began working for the J. Lang Electric Co., in Chicago, and in 1914 went with the Schultz Piano Co. where he remained until he entered the army in 1917. After being trained at Camp



ARTHUR E. ESTHUS

Logan, Houston, Tex., he went across with the 108th Trench Mortar Battery of the 33rd Division. He took part in the St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne offensives and was promoted to the rank of sergeant.

Honorably discharged in April, 1919, he returned to Chicago and went back with the Schultz Piano Co. Because of his daughter's health, he left the concern in June, 1926, and came to Sarasota. From then until 1938 he was engaged in the transfer business. During that period he bought a half interest in the Sarasota Typewriter & Key Shop, his partner being H. O. Lane. Mr. Esthus bought out Mr. Lane's interest in the concern in 1941 and is now sole owner.

Mr. Esthus was elected as a city commissioner on December 4, 1945. He is a past commander of the Sarasota Bay Post American Legion, a member of the board of stewards of the First Methodist Church, and is a member of the Sarasota County Jury Commission. For many years he has been active in Boy Scout work. He served as scout master of the American Legion Boy Scout troop for two years, and is a member and former chairman of the Sarasota District of Boy Scouts. He is also treasurer of the Sarasota Y. M. C. A.

In 1944, Mr. Esthus received the American community service award for outstanding work for Sarasota.

On October 17, 1919, Mr. Esthus was married to Clara W. Anderson, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. C. A. Anderson, of Chicago. They have three living children: Marjorie L., born October 14, 1923; Raymond A., born March 17, 1925, and George I., born October 10, 1929. Both Marjorie and Raymond were graduated from Sarasota High School; Marjorie later attended Stetson University and Raymond, Florida Southern College. He entered the army in June, 1943, and in 1946 was still serving in the European theatre.

### ERNEST BOLEY LORD

Ernest Boley Lord was born in Commerce, Ga., September 21, 1898, the son of Sumner Jule and Lulu Jane (Dalrymple) Lord, members of old Georgia families. He attended the public schools at Ila and when 16 years old, started working as a mechanic in a garage in Ila, and later in Athens, Ga.

Mr. Lord came to Florida in the fall of 1920 and started working for L. M. Rehbinder, of Ft. Meade, Ford dealer and pioneer bus operator of South Florida. Starting as a mechanic in Mr. Rehbinder's garage, Mr. Lord within a few months became a bus driver on the Ft. Meade, Lakeland, Bartow and Lake Wales run.

In July, 1925, he was transferred by Mr. Rehbinder to Fort Myers to work on the South Florida Bus Line between Fort Myers and Sarasota. In September, 1926, he was transferred to Sarasota and ran on the line between here and Tampa. In July, 1930, he was made Sarasota station manager of the Tamiami Trail Tours, Inc., and has held that position ever since.

Mr. Lord also entered the taxi business in 1932, starting the Bus Station Taxi Service, which, in 1936, was named the Yellow Cab Service. In 1942, Mr.



ERNEST BOLEY LORD

Lord bought the Radio Cab Service from John Luderma and he has operated both services ever since.

On May 10, 1926, Mr. Lord was married to Doris Elder, of Marianna, Fla., who died in 1928. On August 28, 1933, he was married to Anna Mae Middleton, of Robertsedale, Ala. Mr. and Mrs. Lord have a son, William Ernest Lord, born September 14, 1942.

Mr. Lord is a member of the Elks lodge. He is also a member of the Missionary Baptist Church. Mrs. Lord is a member of the Methodist Church.

#### HOWARD OWEN CHENEY

Howard Owen Cheney was born in Stephens, Ga., December 6, 1894, the son of Enoch C. and Martha (Smith) Cheney. He was educated in the Stephens public schools, Gibson-Mercer College, in Bowman, Ga., and the Athens Business College, in Athens, Ga.

While still a youth, Mr. Cheney started working as a clerk in a general merchandise store in Stephens. During World War I, he served nearly a year and a half in the field artillery.

After being honorably discharged from the army, Mr. Cheney entered the grocery business and in January, 1926, came to Sarasota. In March, 1926, he went

into business for himself at 109 E. Ninth Street. In September, 1934, he moved next door into the modern store building he had just finished. Handling the best merchandise obtainable, his business grew steadily. As a result, he has had to enlarge and remodel the store three times.

Mr. Cheney is a member of the Rotary Club, the American Legion, and the First Baptist Church.

On February 24, 1920, he was married to Mary Howard of Stephens, Ga., a graduate of Greensboro College for Women, Greensboro, N. C. Mr. and Mrs. Cheney had three children: Howard Owen, Jr., born July 25, 1921; Lucyle, born May 12, 1923, and Carolyn, born November 30, 1924. Mrs. Cheney died Wednesday, April 3, 1946.

Howard Owen Cheney, Jr., who was graduated from Emory University, in Atlanta, in May, 1942, had enlisted the preceding February in the U.S.N.R. He served until December, 1945, when he was honorably discharged with the rank of lieutenant senior grade. Lucyle is a graduate of Wesleyan College, of Macon, Ga. Carolyn attended the University of Alabama for two years and was married to Lieut. J. P. Green, Jr., of Anniston, Ala., May 26, 1944.

Mrs. Cheney was an active member of the Garden Club, the Red Cross, and the Baptist Missionary Society.



HOWARD OWEN CHENEY

## FRANCIS C. DART

Francis C. Dart was born in Douglas, Ga., April 21, 1902, the son of F. Willis and Mattie (Clements) Dart, descendants of pioneer Georgia families.

F. Willis Dart, a native of Brunswick, Ga., was graduated from the University of Georgia in 1893 and practiced law in Douglas for many years. He served several years as judge of the superior court in the Brunswick, Ga., circuit. In 1925, he came to Florida and practiced in Tampa until the summer of 1926 when he came to Sarasota, becoming associated with the law firm of John F. Burket. Late in 1929 he formed a partnership with J. J. Williams, Jr., under the firm name of Williams and Dart. He died August 14, 1937.

Francis C. Dart was graduated from the University of Georgia with an A. B. degree in 1922 and then studied four years at George Washington University, in Washington, D. C., from which he was graduated with an L.L.B. degree in 1926. He was admitted to the bar in Florida in March, 1927, and at that time started practicing here in the office of John F. Burket.

He continued to be associated with Mr. Burket until January, 1933, when he became county judge, to which office he had been elected the preceding fall. He was re-elected in 1936 and served until a short time after the death of his father when he resigned as county judge and went into the law firm of Williams



FRANCIS C. DART

and Dart, which was then continued under its old name.

In December, 1945, Mr. Dart was appointed Sarasota's first city attorney under the city manager form of government.

Mr. Dart is a past exalted ruler and member of the Elks, a past president of the Junior Chamber of Commerce, and is a member of the Masonic lodge, Delta Tau Delta Fraternity, and the Episcopal Church.

On March 14, 1940, Mr. Dart was married to Margaret Easterling, of Glenville, Ga. Mr. and Mrs. Dart have two daughters: Margaret Ann, born August 25, 1941, and Mary Frances, born April 24, 1944.

## KARL A. BICKEL

Karl A. Bickel was born in Geneseo, Ill., January 20, 1882. He was graduated from the Geneseo High School. While a member of the senior class, he edited the local Daily Arena, of Geneseo. He then became editor of the Rock Island, Ill., edition of the Davenport, Ia., Times.

Enrolling in Stanford University, in Stanford, Cal., in 1903, he worked his way through by doing campus newspaper work for various California newspapers. He covered the San Francisco earthquake disaster. Later, he joined the staff of the San Francisco Examiner as night city editor. With the organization of the United Press Association in 1907 he opened a number of United Press bureaus in the Pacific northwest with headquarters at Portland, Ore. In 1908, he purchased an interest in the Grand Junction, Col., Daily News. He remained in that city until 1913 when he returned to the United Press, in the New York office.

He worked his way up in the United Press serving as business manager, general news manager, and from 1922 to 1935, as president. As president, he inaugurated and expanded the United Press service in China, Japan, the Phillipines, Spain, Italy, Sweden, Germany, Poland, and Austria and signed an exchange-of-news-service contract with Soviet Russia, in Moscow, in 1922, the first ever concluded with the Soviet government.

Retiring in 1935, Mr. Bickel retains a connection with the United Press as a director of the organization. He is also chairman of the board of Scripps-Howard Radio Co., a subsidiary of the Scripps-Howard newspapers, and is a director of the Institute of Current World Affairs, a Crane foundation.

When the entrance of the United States into World War II became imminent, he established at the request of Nelson Rockefeller the press section of the Office of Co-ordinator of Inter-American Affairs. He served as a member of the policy group of the co-ordinator's office and directed the work of counter-acting enemy propaganda in Central and South America by counter-propaganda. This was accomplished, in part, by the publication of the magazine *En Guardia*, which he founded. The magazine, printed in Spanish and Portuguese, attained a circulation of 750,000 copies an issue in South America. During the war, he



KARL A. BICKEL

made several trips of investigation to Mexico, Central America and the West Indies.

Mr. Bickel is married to Helen Madira Davis. Mr. and Mrs. Bickel first came to Sarasota in 1928 and have been here every winter since. In 1933, they purchased their present home just south of the Ringling Hotel and moved into it January 1, 1935.

Since coming to Sarasota, both Mr. and Mrs. Bickel have taken a deep interest in community affairs, particularly in regard to the beautification of the city. Mr. Bickel took a leading part in the movements which led to the construction by the city and federal government of the Civic Center and Lido Beach Casino projects (q.v.). He has been a member of the Sarasota Park Board since 1938. He is also a member of the board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce. He was one of the founders and the first president of the Longboat Cabana Club. His other clubs are: New York Yacht Club, The Dutch Treat, and the Metropolitan, of New York, and the National Press Club, of Washington. He is the author of "New Empires—The Newspaper & Radio," published in 1930, and "The Mangrove Coast," published in 1941.

In 1946 he was named president of the Florida Historical Society, a member of the operating committee of the board of control of the John and Mable Ringling museums, and the Sarasota County member of the Everglades National Park Commission.

Mrs. Bickel has been an active member and president of the Federated Circles of the Sarasota Garden Club, and also president of the Federation. Late in January, 1946, she inaugurated a series of radio broadcasts, sponsored by the Federation, designed to encourage further beautification of the city through garden planting. In 1946, she was vice-president of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs.

In 1940, she organized the Sarasota County unit of the British War Relief and inaugurated a week's drive to raise \$2,000 to purchase a motor kitchen for the British. The drive resulted in raising \$6,000 with which three motor kitchens were purchased. They were used by the British through the London 'blitz', and in North Africa and Germany. Drafted from the British War Relief by Chairman James Haley of the Sarasota Red Cross, she initiated the first of the two major Red Cross drives, tripling the quota and collecting over \$18,000 in the initial drive in 1942 and collecting \$32,000 in 1943. In 1945, she headed a drive which netted \$15,000 for the Sarasota Hospital.

### RALPH W. CHADWICK

Ralph W. Chadwick was born in Punta Gorda, Florida, June 18, 1908, the son of Clay and Notha (Willis) Chadwick, natives of North Carolina who settled in Punta Gorda in 1898.



RALPH W. CHADWICK

Clay Chadwick entered the wholesale fish business at Punta Gorda with his two brothers, Stephen and Hubbard Chadwick, as partners, and during the years which followed built up one of the largest concerns on the Florida West Coast. Headquarters of the firm, known as the Chadwick Fisheries, were moved to Sarasota in 1928 and offices and warehouses were established at Payne Terminal.

Ralph Chadwick was educated in the Punta Gorda public schools and was graduated from Punta Gorda High School in 1925. He then attended the University of Florida for three years. During summer vacations, he traveled widely in Continental Europe and the British Isles.

In 1928, Mr. Chadwick started working for Chadwick fisheries, then owned by his father and Stephen Chadwick. In 1936, Stephen retired and Clay became sole owner of the concern, with Ralph as manager. In 1942, Clay retired and his interests were purchased by Ralph who has conducted the business ever since.

Ralph Chadwick is a member of Delta Chi Fraternity, the Elks, the Sarasota County Chamber of Commerce, the Florida Fish Producers Association, and the National Fisheries Institute. He is an ardent golfer.

On June 1, 1930, Mr. Chadwick was married to Mary Filkin, daughter of James Park and Clara (Smith) Filkin. Mr. and Mrs. Chadwick have three children: Ralph Willis, Jr., born June 25, 1931; Gail Dee, born February 15, 1941, and Patsy Lee, born March 13, 1943. During the war, when help was hard to get, Mrs. Chadwick actively assisted her husband in managing the firm's business.

### BENTON W. POWELL

Benton W. Powell was born in Aurora, Ind., July 25, 1899, the son of Wirt B. and Katherine (Sohns) Powell. He attended the public schools in Lexington and Bloomington, Ill., and matriculated at Illinois Wesleyan University. He studied accounting and business administration at Northwestern University and at LaSalle Extension University, Chicago, Ill. He became a certified public accountant in Illinois in 1928 and a member of the Illinois Society of Certified Public Accountants.

Mr. Powell went with the Palmer Estate organization in 1926, in their Chicago offices. He was transferred to the Tampa office of the organization in February, 1931, and two months later to the Sarasota office.

Mr. Powell is now president of the Palmer National Bank & Trust Co., and vice-president and Florida manager of the Palmer Florida Corporation and Palmer Properties, Inc.

From 1934 to 1938, Mr. Powell was publisher of the Sarasota Tribune, a daily newspaper which was purchased by the Herald Publishing Co.

Mr. Powell is a veteran of both World Wars. In September, 1918, when he was 18 years old, he enlisted in the army and served in the infantry until the end of the year. Almost a quarter century later, on January 1, 1943, he was commissioned as a captain in



BENTON W. POWELL

the army and served in the finance department at Newark, N. J., being discharged with the rank of major in June, 1945.

Before entering the army in World War II, he served as a member of the board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce for many years, was a director of the Kiwanis Club, was a member of the advisory board of the Salvation Army. He was a member of the Sarasota Hospital Board, a director of the Anglers Club and the Red Cross, and was chairman of the Sarasota Housing Authority. He is now a member of the Sarasota Bay Country Club, and a director of the Chamber of Commerce. He is a member of the Presbyterian Church.

On January 12, 1921, he was married to Hazelle Hancock, of New Albany, Ind. Mr. and Mrs. Powell have a daughter, Arlys, born April 20, 1923.

### RALPH E. DEACON

Ralph E. Deacon was born in Toledo, Ohio, September 6, 1900, the son of Charles W. and Gertrude (Stanciff) Deacon. After being graduated from the Hillsdale, Mich., high school, he attended the School of Civil Engineering at Purdue University, the Meggs School of Architecture, and Franks Business School.



RALPH E. DEACON

After finishing school, he spent two years with the Vincennes Bridge Co., of Vincennes, Ind., doing layout and construction work. Later he became a union painter and a union carpenter, working in Toledo, O., and South Bend, Ind.

After acquiring this experience, Mr. Deacon became estimator and construction superintendent of the Indiana Lumber and Manufacturing Co., of South Bend. He remained with that concern for five years and then came to Florida, in the late summer of 1925, and became estimator and mill superintendent of the Sunshine Lumber Co., of St. Petersburg.

Mr. Deacon came to Sarasota January 1, 1932, and became general manager of the West Coast Lumber Co. Less than a year after the United States entered World War II, he enlisted in the army to serve in the Combat Engineers Corps. After taking basic training at Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo., he was sent to the officers' training camp at Ft. Belvoir, Va. He successfully passed all tests but a breakdown in health caused him to be honorably discharged on March 5, 1943.

During the following summer, after he had regained his health, he rejoined the West Coast Lumber Co., from which he had a leave of absence. He is now general manager and president of the concern.

On March 27, 1943, Mr. Deacon was married to Connie Lee Noblin. Mr. and Mrs. Deacon have a son, Jack, born November 11, 1944. Mr. Deacon also has

a daughter by a former marriage, Jeanne, born February 8, 1926.

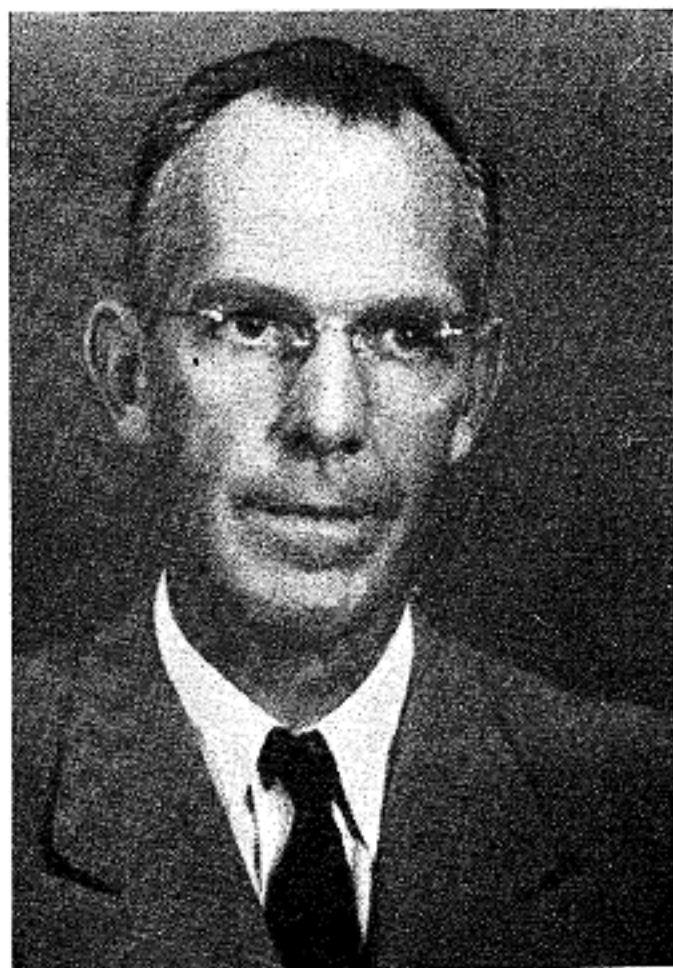
Mr. Deacon is a member of the Sarasota Bay Country Club and the American Legion. He is also identified with Sunny Land Council Boy Scouts of America, the Red Cross, Salvation Army, and the Chamber of Commerce. His hobbies are hunting and golf.

### MAXWELL E. COOKE

Maxwell E. Cooke was born in Orange, Mass., August 25, 1891, the son of Edward H. and Anna (Lucas) Cooke. Educated in the Orange public schools, he was graduated from high school in 1910 and soon afterward started to work in a clothing store in Springfield, Mass.

In 1912, he returned to Orange to go into the trucking business with his father, with whom he remained until after war was declared in 1917 when he enlisted in the army air corps. He was trained at Kelly Field, Texas, and was sent overseas early in 1918. He served abroad 18 months and was honorably discharged in July, 1919.

After leaving the army, he was employed to take charge of the printing plant of the Minute Tapioca Co., in Orange. When this concern was absorbed by General Foods, Inc., he remained as manager of the



MAXWELL E. COOKE

printing plant which soon afterward was separately incorporated as the Gridley-Stone Co., of which Mr. Cooke became vice-president and assistant treasurer.

He remained with this concern until 1932, when he sold his interests and came to Sarasota. In June of the same year he entered the automobile business. Since 1935 he has been the Sarasota agent for Cadillac and Oldsmobile automobiles, his garage being located at 134 Sixth street.

Mr. Cooke is a member of the Masonic lodge and the First Presbyterian Church.

On October 15, 1921, he was married to Edith Gridley, of Salina, Kansas. Mr. and Mrs. Cooke have two sons: Edward G. Cooke, born July 6, 1925, who in 1944 became an ensign in the U.S.N.R., and Maxwell Elwood Cooke, born June 10, 1931, who in 1946 was a student in Sarasota High School. Mrs. Cooke is an active member of the Woman's Club and the Parent-Teachers Association.

### JOHN C. CARDWELL

John C. Cardwell was born in Franklin, Simpson County, Ky., February 5, 1873, the son of P. L. and Elizabeth (Mayes) Cardwell.

After attending the public schools of Franklin, he attended State College in Lexington, Ky. After graduating, he taught school for several years in the county seat towns of Leitchfield, Greenville and Princeton, Ky., and then entered the mercantile business.

In order to realize his lifelong ambition to become a banker, he majored in accounting, bookkeeping, commercial law and kindred subjects while attending college and continued his studies for years after he left school. Finally with the assistance of friends, he organized a small bank in Hardin County, Kentucky, which is still in existence.

Several years later, he was elected secretary of the Kentucky Bankers Association. He remained with the organization a number of years and then became again actively engaged in the banking business in Louisville, Ky., as vice president of the Liberty Insurance Bank (now the Liberty National Bank). Later he became interested in the organization of the Citizens Union Fourth Street Bank of Louisville, of which institution he was elected a director and president. He continued as president until he resigned to come to Florida because of his health.

Shortly after coming to this state, he was appointed to liquidate several banks on the West Coast and he made his headquarters in Sarasota February 1, 1933. Immediately following completion of the banks' liquidation, Mr. Cardwell was persuaded by friends to join in the organization of the Sarasota State Bank which was incorporated July 7, 1939, and which opened the following December 4.

Mr. Cardwell served first as president of the institution. He is now chairman of the board of directors.

He has been active in church work for many years, both in Louisville and Sarasota. He is a steward of the First Methodist Church and is chairman of the finance



JOHN C. CARDWELL

committee. He is a member of the Kiwanis Club and the Chamber of Commerce.

On December 25, 1894, Mr. Cardwell was married to Matilda Liechhardt. Mr. and Mrs. Cardwell have three children, two sons and a daughter. Their older son, Marion, is a partner in the oldest bond and brokerage house in Louisville, Ky. Their younger son, Jack, served four years in the navy during World War II in the Pacific. Their daughter, Mrs. M. V. Pilcher, and her husband and two children, live in Sarasota. Mr. Pilcher is manager of the Sarasota airport.

Mr. and Mrs. Cardwell have five grandchildren: Marion Jane, Betty Anne and Joan Burns Cardwell, of Louisville, and Madge V. and John Cardwell Pilcher of Sarasota.

### THOMAS RICKENBACKER CULLER

Thomas Rickenbacker Culler was born in Cameron, S. C., September 8, 1901, the son of F. I. and Maggie (Rickenbacker) Culler, descendants of old South Carolina families. His father was a banker, a merchant, and a manufacturer.

Mr. Culler was educated in the public schools of Cameron, S. C., The Citadel, in Charleston, S. C., and was graduated from the Georgia School of Technology, in Atlanta, Ga., in 1923.



THOMAS RICKENBACKER CULLER

Shortly after leaving college, Mr. Culler entered the banking business, starting with the First Trust & Savings Co., of Avon Park, Fla., where he remained until the end of 1926. He then went with the Ohio Valley Bank, in Portsmouth, Ohio. Early in 1929 he returned to Florida and became the Avon Park office manager of the American Fruit Growers Association. He remained with the association until 1933 when he was employed by the Florida State Banking Department. Thereafter, he made his home in Sarasota.

In 1939, Mr. Culler became associated with the First Federal Savings & Loan Association, serving in the capacity of executive vice-president. He is also the owner and operator of a large citrus grove at Avon Park.

In 1946 he was serving as president of the Florida Savings Building and Loan League. He was also a director of the Chamber of Commerce, the Sarasota County Welfare Association, the Sarasota County Tuberculosis Association, the Sarasota County Housing Authority, the Sarasota County Chapter Prevention of Infantile Paralysis, and the Sarasota Rotary Club in which he also served two terms as president.

During the war, Mr. Culler took an active part in all war bond drives and received a citation for his work from the Treasury Department. He also had participated in local drives to obtain funds for needed welfare activities and public improvements.

Mr. Culler is a member of the First Baptist Church in which he is now serving on the board of deacons.

On November 30, 1924, Mr. Culler was married to Myra Roberts, daughter of W. A. and Etta (Collier) Roberts, of Avon Park, Fla. Mr. and Mrs. Culler have a son, Thomas R. Culler, Jr., born November, 30, 1926, who entered the army in April, 1945, and in 1946 was serving in the 8th Army in Japan.

### MORGAN DANIEL TAYLOR

Morgan Daniel Taylor was born in Covington County, Alabama, April 16, 1885, the son of William W. and Ella (Huggins) Taylor. He attended the State Normal College in Troy, Ala., and the Jacksonville, Ala., State Normal, and was graduated from Jacksonville in 1911.

Mr. Taylor then taught school in Wilcox County, Alabama, until 1914 when he joined the Alabama Methodist Conference. He transferred to the Florida conference in 1932 and was pastor in Miami during 1932-33.

In the winter of 1934, Mr. Taylor came to Sarasota and opened the Georgia Produce House on 12th Street which he owned and operated for nine years. During that period he also conducted a real estate business. Since January 11, 1943, he has devoted his en-



MORGAN DANIEL TAYLOR

*Due to a typographical error the names under the photographs on this page were reversed. The name in the upper lefthand corner should be MORGAN DANIEL TAYLOR. The name in the lower righthand corner should be THOMAS RICKENBACKER CULLER.*

tire time to the real estate business and has his office in Room 16, Lord's Arcade.

For many years Mr. Taylor was active in the Masonic lodge, Knights of Pythias, and Woodmen lodges. Since coming to Sarasota he has given his support to all organizations working for the betterment of the community and country, including the Community Chest, Salvation Army, Chamber of Commerce and Red Cross. He is a member of the First Baptist Church.

On August 5, 1908, Mr. Taylor was married to Luella Ellisor. Mr. and Mrs. Taylor have two children: Frances Taylor, born October 4, 1916, and Janice Taylor Draper, born March 25, 1926. Mrs. Taylor and the daughters are Methodists.

### BEN J. DRYMON

Ben J. Drymon was born in Willow Springs, Mo., October 15, 1897, the son of James and Naomi (Edwards) Drymon, descendants of old Tennessee families which had moved West to settle in Missouri.

Mr. Drymon attended public schools in Willow Springs and, after being graduated from high school, studied at State Teachers College, in Springfield, Mo., and at the University of Missouri, in Columbia, Mo. He taught one year in the Willow Springs schools and



BEN J. DRYMON

then volunteered for service in the army during World War I. He was sent to the officers' training school in Camp Hancock, Ga., and was commissioned as a second lieutenant.

After the war, Mr. Drymon returned to the University of Missouri. In 1922, he was appointed postmaster in Willow Springs, where the post office had a second class rating, and served twelve years, while Harding, Coolidge and Hoover were presidents.

In 1934, Mr. Drymon came to Sarasota and entered the real estate business as a salesman. A year later he became a broker, being associated with the firm of Norman-Drymon, Inc. In 1937, he started his own firm which he has operated ever since. To broaden his knowledge of appraisals, he attended the Real Estate Appraisal School of Columbia University, in New York City, in 1937.

Since coming to Sarasota, Mr. Drymon has participated actively in civic affairs. He is a past president and member of the Kiwanis Club, is a member of the board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce, and is a past president and the present president of the Sarasota Board of Realtors. He served as vice-president of the Sarasota Housing Authority which in 1942 completed construction of Newtowne Heights, a housing project for colored people which cost \$210,000. He is a member of the Masonic and Elks lodges. In 1936, he was president of the Landon for President Club of Sarasota.

On June 16, 1924, Mr. Drymon was married to Mary Francis Privett, daughter of J. B. and Kate (Whiteside) Privett, of Oxford, Ala. Mr. and Mrs. Drymon have two sons: James Joseph, born March 23, 1926, who was graduated from Sarasota High School in 1943, attended university one year, and in 1946 was serving in the Army Air Corps in the Philippines, and Ben Jay, born September 28, 1927, who was graduated from Sarasota High School in 1945. During his last year in high school Ben Jay won the Kiwanis Club award for the best essay oration and also an award for being the outstanding boy in the senior class. In 1946, he was attending Southern College, in Lakeland. James Joseph is a member of Sigma Chi Fraternity.

Mr. and Mrs. Drymon have been active members of the Presbyterian Church. Mrs. Drymon was president of the women's auxiliary of the church for two years and Mr. Drymon served as superintendent of the adult division of the Sunday school.

### JIM SPRINGER

Jim Springer was born in Ft. Wayne, Ind., March 2, 1890, the son of Charles and Ella (Bushman) Springer. After attending the public schools in Ft. Wayne, he matriculated at Purdue University. In 1909, he started working as a clerk for Bowser & Co., of Ft. Wayne, manufacturers of gas pumps, tanks and dry cleaning equipment.

Mr. Springer remained with the concern for fifteen years, working up to the position of district manager



JIM SPRINGER

with offices in Atlanta. He then came to Florida and entered the automobile business in Miami. He remained there three years, and then, in 1927, went to Ft. Myers and in, 1929, to Tampa. From 1930 through 1932 he was the distributor of Graham automobiles for the Island of Cuba.

Returning to the States, Mr. Springer became sales manager for the Pinellas Motor Co., of St. Petersburg, where he remained until March, 1934, when he joined with Arthur E. Stone in establishing the Sarasota Motor Co., which has the agency for Ford, Mercury, Zephyr and Lincoln automobiles and also the Ford-Ferguson tractors.

Mr. Springer is a member of the Masonic lodge, the Shrine, and the Elks and has been active in Chamber of Commerce work since coming to Sarasota.

On July 30, 1910, Mr. Springer was married to Edna DeVilbiss. Mr. and Mrs. Springer have three daughters: Jane Upton, of San Juan, Puerto Rico; Naomi, wife of T. J. Borek, of Sarasota, and Beth, wife of Dr. C. A. Patterson, of Aurora, Ill.

### ARTHUR E. STONE

Arthur E. Stone was born in Thor, Kentucky, February 16, 1902, the son of William T. and Martha Belle (Stamper) Stone. He was educated in the public

schools of Lewis County, Ky., and after being graduated from high school attended Cass Technical Business College, in Detroit, Mich.

In 1922 he started working in the automobile industry, getting a job in the parts department of Dalrymple-Wellman Co., Ford dealers, of Detroit. He remained with that concern for three years when he came to Florida and became associated with the Shackelford Motor Co., of Miami, which sold Ford and Lincoln cars.

Late in the Twenties, Mr. Stone returned to Detroit for a short period and then went back with Shackelford who had opened an agency in Fort Myers. Later, he was transferred to various parts of the state, working in Orlando, Daytona Beach and four years in St. Petersburg.

In 1934, Mr. Stone joined with Jim Springer in establishing the Sarasota Motor Co., which has the local agency for Ford, Mercury, Zephyr, and Lincoln automobiles and Ford-Ferguson tractors.

On December 24, 1931, Mr. Stone was married to Adelaide Baynard, daughter of Owen Thomas and Elinor (Kansas) Baynard, of Mills Springs, N. C. Mr. and Mrs. Stone have a son, Arthur Thomas, born October 14, 1938.

Mr. Stone is a member of the Masonic lodge of Vanceburg, Ky. Mrs. Stone is an active worker in the Baptist Church and Parent-Teachers Association.



ARTHUR E. STONE

## LOUIS ROY BRACE

Louis Roy Brace was born in Castile, Wyoming County, N. Y., August 31, 1881, the son of William Henry and Mary Helen (Ackerman) Brace. He was educated in the public schools of Castile, N. Y., and in Pittsburgh, Pa., and later lived in New Castle, Pa., Columbus, O., Rochester, N. Y., and Buffalo, N. Y.

Before coming to Sarasota in October, 1934, Mr. Brace had twenty-five years' experience in real estate and the automobile industry and service. Since 1938 he has been manager of Burnell Studio.

For a number of years before coming here, he was a member of the First Temple of Circle of Light, of Buffalo. His hobbies are geneology and gardening.

On January 8, 1902, Mr. Brace was married to Josephine M. McHugh, who died April 8, 1928. On July 11, 1940, he was married to Agnes Riser Brewer. He has two sons, William Earl and Eugene C., both of Buffalo, N. Y.

Mrs. Brace was president of the Indian Beach Garden Circle, 1939-41; president of the Federated Circles of the Sarasota Garden Club, 1941-43; chairman of the civic and beautification committee of the Garden Club, 1943-45; member of the executive board, Federated Circles of Sarasota Garden Club, 1935-45; president of the John A. Fite Chapter of the United

Daughters of the Confederacy, 1945-46, and a member of the Sarasota County War Memorial Committee, 1945-46.

## W. EARL BURNELL

W. Earl Burnell was born January 4, 1880, in Castile, Wyoming County, N. Y. He attended Pike Seminary in Wyoming County. In 1904 he entered the photographic business in Pike, N. Y., and later did home portraiture in Buffalo. He then moved to Penn Yan, N. Y., where he had a general photographic studio for twenty years, doing both portrait and commercial photography.

Mr. Burnell's skill as a photographer has won national recognition. He has been demonstrator at many regional, state and national conventions in the United States and Canada. In 1925, he was elected president of the Professional Photographers Society of New York State.

In 1934, Mr. Burnell came to Sarasota and established a studio. In 1937, he was made president of the Florida Photographers Association. In 1940, he was elected president of the Southeastern Photographers Association, which includes seven southeastern states. In the same year he was honored with the degree of Mas-



LOUIS ROY BRACE



W. EARL BURNELL

ter of Photography by the Photographers Association of America.

Mr. Burnell is a member of the Kiwanis Club, the Masonic lodge, and the Baptist Church. On October 9, 1901, he was married to Mae E. Curtis.

### JOSEPH V. LAWRENCE

Joseph V. Lawrence was born in Marysville, O., April 25, 1879, the son of Joseph W. and Nancy (Smith) Lawrence. He was graduated from the Marysville high school in 1897 and a year later joined the 4th Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiment and served during the Spanish-American War in Porto Rico.

After returning to civilian life, he started working as a traveling retail book salesman. His first business venture was in Lima, O., where he started a bicycle and automobile concern. Soon afterward he went to Chicago and for the next 25 years was engaged in the automotive industry, first selling cars and later manufacturing and distributing automobile parts.

In 1925 he entered the real estate business in Chicago as a broker, selling subdivisions and acting as leasing agent and manager of some of the largest buildings in the Loop. He continued to be active in Chicago until 1936 when he decided to come to Sarasota to "semi-retire." Instead, he soon began taking a most active part in community affairs.

In 1937, he was chairman of the Lido Beach committee of the Chamber of Commerce which succeeded in putting through the Lido Beach Casino project. During 1938 and 1939 he was president of the Chamber. He appointed and served on the mosquito control committee of the Chamber which mapped out a countywide program for the eradication of the pests. He also was chairman of the Chamber's defense projects committee which helped obtain the Sarasota and Venice air bases. He served as a member of the reorganization committee of the Sarasota Bay Country Club.

Mr. Lawrence is the only Sarasota citizen holding an honorary membership in the Chamber of Commerce and the country club. He served as commander of Sunshine Post Veterans of Foreign Wars in 1938 and chairman of the Red Cross disaster committee. During 1944 and 1945 he served as city councilman. He still retains membership in a number of Chicago clubs and is a member of Landmark 422 Masonic Lodge. He is now president of the P. & L. Properties, Inc., a real estate organization and insurance agency.

On September 15, 1909, Mr. Lawrence was married to Lillian L. Musgate. Mrs. Lawrence, who was a fashion artist in Chicago at the time of her marriage, has taken an active part in community affairs in Sarasota, particularly in connection with the Sarasota Garden Club and the Red Cross. During the war she served as hostess at the Civic Center and Service Club on the Pier. She was chairman of the Federated Garden Clubs and of the Sarasota Flower Show for two years.



JOSEPH V. LAWRENCE

### WALTER N. MUNROE

Walter N. Munroe was born in Cleveland, O., July 29, 1884, the son of Larra and Mary A. (Kendall) Munroe. He was educated in the public schools of Boston and after being graduated from high school attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he completed a four year course in electrical engineering in 1906.

Upon leaving college, Mr. Munroe went into the Boston office of Stone & Webster and was sent by that firm to Dallas, Texas, where he worked for the Dallas Electric Light & Power Co. until 1911. He was then sent to Port Arthur, Tex., as superintendent of the Port Arthur Light & Power Co. He resigned in 1915 to accept the position of manager of the Paris district for the Texas Power & Light Co.

He remained with that concern until 1925 when he came to Florida to help organize the Florida Power & Light Co., which was incorporated December 28, 1925. He then was made manager of the western division with headquarters in Lakeland where he remained until 1935 when he made Sarasota his home.

In 1914, Mr. Munroe assisted in organizing the Rotary Club in Port Arthur, Tex., and served as the club's first secretary, later being elected president. He



WALTER N. MUNROE

has been a Rotarian ever since and has served as president of the Sarasota Rotary Club.

Mr. Munroe has served as president of Sunny Land Council Boy Scouts of America for seven years, treasurer of the Sarasota Hospital Board, and has been active in civic work wherever located. An Episcopalian, he has served at various times as vestryman, junior warden, and a member of the diocesan executive board.

On August 15, 1911, he was married to Clarine Rebecca Golay, of Dallas, Tex. Mr. and Mrs. Munroe have two children: Jane, married to J. E. Neel, and living in Tampa; and James L., who served 27 months in the signal corps in Africa and Italy, and is married, living in Daytona Beach.

Mrs. Munroe is a director of the altar guild of the Episcopal Church.

### JACOB HAROLD ADDISON

Jacob Harold Addison was born December 21, 1888, on a farm near Freehold, N. J., where Monmouth Battle was fought in the Revolutionary War. He was the son of Thomas and Mary (Justice) Addison, descendants of early American families.

He was educated in the public schools of Freehold and Manasquan, N. J., and was graduated from the

Manasquan High School. He then began working for the Turner Construction Co., of New York, and took night courses in engineering at Pratt Technical School.

After obtaining a grounding in engineering subjects, he quit school and started working as superintendent for the W. H. Norris Construction Co., of Spring Lake, N. J. Upon the death of Mr. Norris early in 1913, he bought out the concern and conducted the business successfully until 1917. He was then employed as construction superintendent by the U. S. Shipping Board and sent to Jacksonville, Fla., where he supervised the building of warehouses, and ships until the spring of 1919.

Mr. Addison then resigned and went to White Springs, Fla., to rest. But within a few months he was back at work again, at Live Oaks, building a theatre, a number of large residences, and a Masonic temple. In 1921, he came to South Florida and handled construction work for Haynes & Van Horn, developers of Polk City and Haynes City, and also worked independently as a contractor.

Early in 1934, he was employed by the Public Works Administration as a resident-engineer to supervise the construction of projects being done under private contract. He resigned in the spring of 1936 and in July of that year came to Sarasota where he organized the Orange State Lumber Co. He has served as vice-president and general manager of the concern



JACOB HAROLD ADDISON

ever since, building up the business until the concern has become one of the largest of its kind in this section of Florida.

On July 17, 1917, Mr. Addison was married to Louise Reid, of New York. Mr. and Mrs. Addison have two children: Richard, born April 23, 1918, who served more than four years in the army air force during World War II, being honorably discharged with the rank of technical sergeant on January 30, 1946, and Blanche, born November 7, 1919, the wife of Fred Byrd, of San Angelo, Tex., who served nine years with the army air corps and was honorably discharged early in 1946, as a master sergeant.

Mr. Addison is a member of the Masonic lodge, Chapter, Commandery and Shrine, the Elks lodge, and the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. and Mrs. Addison are members of the Presbyterian Church.

For many years, Mr. Addison was an expert trap-shooter and bowler. He is also an ardent fisherman and golfer, and likes all other forms of outdoor sports.

### E. LEONARD CREES

E. Leonard Crees, for nine years one of Sarasota's most active civic workers and business men, was born in Birmingham, England, February 9, 1888, the son of Eustace and Emma (Taylor) Crees. When he was two years old, his family came to the United States and settled in Providence, R. I.

Mr. Crees attended public schools in Providence and in 1906, after being graduated from high school, became an apprentice in the oldest wholesale drygoods house in the United States, Taylor, Symonds & Co., established in Providence in 1811. He resigned from the concern in 1937, after 31 years of service, and came to Sarasota to retire. In 1942 he established the Crees News and Book Shop which he developed into one of the largest businesses of its kind in the state.

Mr. Crees was closely identified with community affairs until his death, after a few days' illness, on March 6, 1946. He was one of the city's most energetic boosters and performed invaluable service as active head of various salvage campaigns during the war.

Instrumental in the reorganization of the Retail Merchants Association, Mr. Crees served as its secretary for two years. He was a member of the boards of directors of the Chamber of Commerce and Y.M.C.A. and was affiliated with the Masonic Shrine fraternal groups.

As chairman in charge of waste paper salvage, he established a state record in per capita collection. He also headed clothing drives for war refugees, directed the sale of Christmas seals to help finance activities of the tuberculosis and health association and was chairman of the Lions' Club "blood bank" unit.

Mr. Crees was survived by his widow; a daughter, Mrs. James Milne, of Braintree, Mass.; a son Arthur Crees, of Providence; a step-son, Rodney Cochran, of Sarasota; his father, Eustace Crees, of Sarasota; a sister,



E. LEONARD CREES

Mrs. Arthur Rushton, of Providence, and a granddaughter, Sandra Milne.

### MAYNARD ERWIN RUSSELL

Maynard Erwin Russell was born in Barry County, Michigan, September 28, 1910, the son of Guy Earl and Ada (Wright) Russell. After being graduated from high school in Battle Creek, Mich., he enrolled in Battle Creek College.

In 1919, Mr. Russell began selling the Saturday Evening Post in Battle Creek and worked his way up to the position of manager of the central Ohio territory. His work for the Post was continuous except for two years spent with the Kellogg Co. in 1929 and 1930.

He resigned from the Post organization early in 1937 and came to Sarasota where he established the Russell News Agency, which distributes leading magazines and newspapers to retail dealers in Sarasota, Bradenton, Palmetto, Venice, Punta Gorda and Ft. Myers. His concern also distributes post cards in this territory.

During the spring of 1945, the Russell News Agency was moved into a modern plant on Second Street, built especially to permit the expeditious handling of large numbers of publications.



MAYNARD ERWIN RUSSELL

Mr. Russell is a member of the Rotary Club, the Sarasota Yacht Club, the Chamber of Commerce and the Junior Chamber of Commerce. He is also a member of the Methodist church. His hobbies are fishing, sailing and traveling.

On October 13, 1935, Mr. Russell was married to Phyllis Allegra Boggs. Mr. and Mrs. Russell have four children: Barbara Sue, born August 2, 1936; Sally, born August 6, 1941; Jon Thomas, born April 12, 1944, and Tom G., born November 15, 1945.

Mr. and Mrs. Russell are the owners of one of the oldest homesteads in Sarasota, located on the bayfront on the south side of Whitaker Bayou. This was the site given by Mrs. William Whitaker, widow of the first settler of the Land of Sarasota, to her daughter Flora upon her marriage to Frank Brooks.

#### ERNEST C. SEARS

Ernest C. Sears was born June 11, 1906, in Webster County, Georgia, near Richland, the son of Milford W. and Ada (Reeves) Sears, descendants of old Georgia families.

He attended public schools in Stewart County, Ga., the high school in Edison, Ga., and then took an academic course in the Douglas Agricultural and Me-

chanical School, in Douglas, Ga., now known as the South Georgia Teachers College.

Before finishing school, Mr. Sears worked each summer and between courses in the express office in Arlington, Ga. During 1925 and 1926, he covered south Georgia and west Florida for a wholesale hardware firm of Bainbridge, Ga.

In January, 1927, Mr. Sears made his home in Tampa where he became associated with I. W. Phillips & Co., wholesale hardware and building supply concern. During the next eight years, he covered the Florida West Coast for the firm. He then became the West Coast representative of Belknap Hardware & Manufacturing Co., of Louisville, Ky.

In 1938, Mr. Sears came to Sarasota, bought the Archibald Furniture & Hardware Co. and established the Sears Hardware Co. The concern, located at 248 Main Street, handles a general line of hardware, paints, sporting goods and marine supplies and specializes in builders' hardware and allied lines.

During the war, Mr. Sears left his business in the hands of his employees and became plant defense coordinator of the Tampa Shipbuilding Co., in Tampa. A total of 430 persons worked under his direction, in the guard force, fire department, first aid and safety departments, and the material and personnel pass department. He was responsible for the protection of the shipbuilding yards and the safety of all employees.



ERNEST C. SEARS

While he was in charge, the accident frequency rate dropped from 65.5 lost hours per month to 19.5. He resigned in January, 1945, and returned to Sarasota to resume charge of his concern.

Mr. Sears is a member of the board of directors and a former vice-president of the Chamber of Commerce, a board member of the Rotary Club and Sarasota Yacht Club, and a member of the Elks. On December 4, 1945, he was selected as one of Sarasota's first city commissioners. In April, 1946, he was elected president of the Rotary Club.

On July 6, 1935, Mr. Sears was married to Thelma Donahoo, daughter of James Hutchins and Grace (Baylor) Donahoo, of Tampa. Mrs. Sears is an alumnus of the Florida State College for Women and a member of Chi Omega Sorority and Junior League of Tampa.

Mr. and Mrs. Sears have two children: Sandra Donahoo Sears, born October 18, 1937, and Ernest C. Sears, Jr., born October 10, 1939.

### EDWARD HOWARD BAKER

Edward Howard Baker was born October 12, 1887, in Nashville, Tenn., the son of Ernest and Naomi (Fletcher) Berry, who had come from England in the early Eighties to settle at Rugby, Tenn. They later moved to Nashville where two sons were born.

The old home place of the Berry's at Rugby now belongs to Mr. Baker and is known by everyone in that section as "Idylwild". The old homestead is still practically the same as it was when Mr. Baker's grandparents lived there. Grandpa Berry lived to the age of 92 years and Grandmother Berry lived to be 89 years old.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Berry died when their sons were very small. Edward Howard was adopted by Mr. and Mrs. T. E. Baker and his brother, Melville Hastings, was adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Ellsworth Scales.

After being educated in the Nashville public schools, Mr. Baker attended a business college. While still going to school he began working as a bookkeeper at \$25 a month for the Cumberland Telephone Co.

By 1908, Mr. Baker and his brother had grown to manhood and then they became separated and he has heard nothing of his brother since that time.

Mr. Baker continued working for the Cumberland Telephone Co., until it was purchased by the Southern Bell Telephone Co. He then went with the latter concern and became its general bookkeeper in the Atlanta office.

By 1918, Mr. Baker left the telephone company to become cashier and bookkeeper for a large wholesale grocery company in Nashville. He remained there three years and then started in the furniture business, first working at a store in Nashville and then for a wholesale dealer, traveling in the southern states.

In 1938, Mr. Baker came to Sarasota and established the Baker Furniture Co., one of the largest furniture stores south of Tampa.



EDWARD HOWARD BAKER

Since coming to Sarasota, Mr. Baker has been active in civic affairs. He served two terms as president of the Retail Merchants Association, during 1944 and 1945. During the war, he served as a member of the tire rationing board. He is a member of the Baptist Church, and is also a Rotarian. His hobbies are fishing and collecting antique furniture.

One of Mr. Baker's most prized possessions is a beautiful little hand-tooled leather book of poetry which belonged to his mother. It was presented to her in 1878 as first prize for attendance at Church School in London.

On June 2, 1908, Mr. Baker married Mayme Lee Logan. Mr. and Mrs. Baker have three children: Thomas Hastings, who entered the army in April, 1945, and in 1946 was stationed in Japan; Mrs. Elizabeth Bartlett, wife of Waldo Bartlett, and Mrs. Sarah Bartlett, wife of John Alford Bartlett.

### CHARLES ROWLAND SHANNON

Charles Rowland Shannon was born March 14, 1899, in Coloma, Park County, Indiana, the son of Cyrus L. and Hattie I. (Overman) Shannon. He attended primary schools in Monrovia, Ind., and was graduated from high school in Bradenton. He then attended Southern College in Sutherland, Fla.



CHARLES ROWLAND SHANNON

After college, he spent six months in the United States Merchant Marine during World War I. He then worked for three years as a bookkeeper in the First National Bank, in Bradenton; then was agent of the Texas Co. in Bradenton for three years. He then served ten years as superintendent of the Florida Methodist Orphanage, in Enterprise, Fla.

Mr. Shannon entered the funeral directors' profession in 1939 and became senior partner of the Roberts-Shannon Funeral Home which now occupies the beautiful home built by John Hamilton Gillespie, one of the founders of Sarasota, when he returned here after serving in Scotland during World War I.

Mr. Shannon was a scoutmaster in the Boy Scouts of America for ten years. He has been a member of the Methodist Church since early childhood, has taught boys' classes for years, and has served as chairman of the board of stewards of the church many times. During his entire adult life he has been active in everything pertaining to young people's betterment and for years has been a strong fighter against alcoholic beverages.

In 1944, he was elected a member of the board of the public instruction, his term beginning January 3, 1945. He is a member of the Kiwanis Club and is serving, in 1946, as president.

On November 19, 1923, Mr. Shannon was married to Sarah Peek, of Dade City, Fla. Mr. and Mrs.

Shannon have two children: Joseph, born October 4, 1926, who served during World War II in the U. S. navy, and Miriam, born November 1, 1932.

### WILFRID TALMAGE ROBERTS

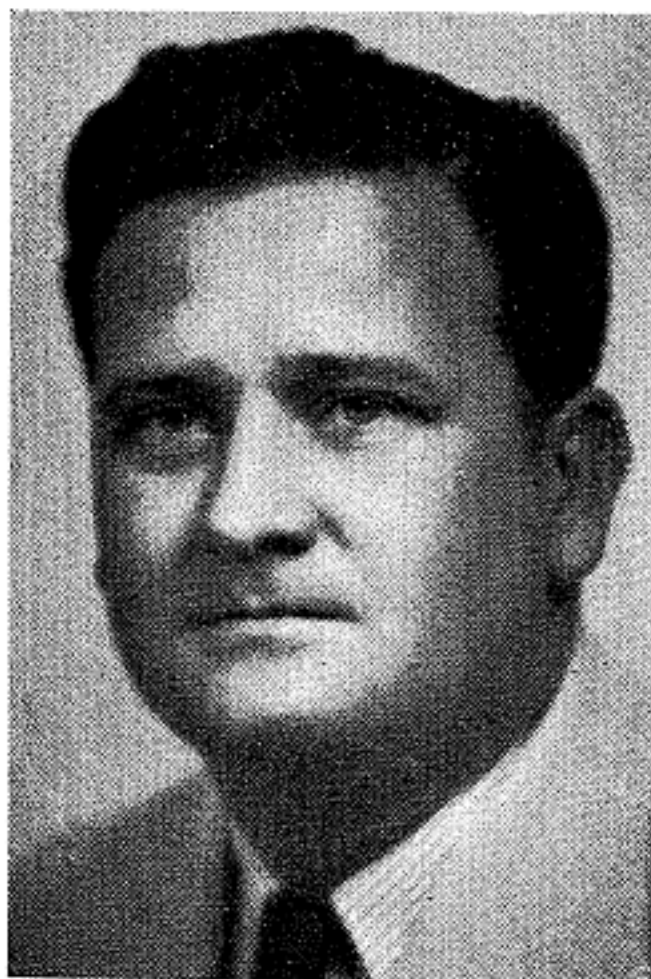
Wilfrid Talmage Roberts was born in Alachua, Fla., February 23, 1912, the son of William Thomas and Alice (Fowler) Roberts. The Roberts family came to Florida in 1830 and the Fowler family in 1825.

After being graduated from the Alachua High School, Mr. Roberts attended the Gupton-Jones Embalming College. When still a boy, he started with his father in the funeral business and remained with him until 1935 when he opened a funeral home with his brother.

In 1939, he joined with C. R. Shannon in establishing the Roberts-Shannon Funeral Home, in Sarasota. During World War II, he served in the U. S. navy as a pharmacist mate from September, 1942, until October, 1945.

He is a member of the Lions Club, the Elks, Odd-fellows, American Legion, and the Junior Chamber of Commerce. He is also a member of the Methodist Church.

On June 18, 1940, Mr. Roberts was married to Bonnie Ellis, of Sarasota. Mr. and Mrs. Roberts have a daughter, Bonnie Carol, born September 21, 1945.



WILFRID TALMAGE ROBERTS

## PHILIP BENNETT HUGUENIN

Philip Bennett Huguenin was born in Wilmette, Ill., September 28, 1900, the son of Philip and Gertrude (Bennett) Huguenin. He attended the public schools at Wilmette and Winnetka, Ill.

After graduating from high school, he enlisted as an ambulance driver for the Red Cross and served overseas until August, 1919.

Returning to civilian life, he enrolled at Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill., where he studied two years. He then took student courses at the Inland Steel Co., in Chicago, where he remained until the fall of 1925 when he came to Florida to work for the Phoenix Utility Co., a construction firm which was erecting power plants and installing transmission lines for the Florida Power & Light Co.

In November, 1926, Mr. Huguenin went with the latter concern, in Punta Gorda. He was made manager of the Punta Gorda district in March, 1927. He was president of the Federal Savings & Loan Co., of Punta Gorda and a director of the Punta Gorda State Bank. In 1939 he was transferred to Sarasota as manager of the company's property. He has been associated with the Florida Power & Light Co. ever since.

Mr. Huguenin served as president of the Chamber of Commerce during the year of 1940-41. He is a member and a past president of the Kiwanis Club. He

is also a member of the Elks, and a member and vestryman of the Episcopal Church.

On November 18, 1927, Mr. Huguenin was married to Iris Bassett, of Punta Gorda. Mr. and Mrs. Huguenin have one son, Philip Stanley, born February 11, 1941.

## DR. JONAS E. MILLER

Dr. Jonas E. Miller was born December 6, 1900, of Amish parents, Eli S. and Magdalena (Helmuth) Miller at Welshfield, Geauga County, Ohio. He was raised at Plain City, O., where he attended public schools. He later attended Baltimore Medical College, New Jersey College of Osteopathy, and United States School of Naturopathy.

For many years, Dr. Miller engaged in practice in Washington, D. C., and for six years was director of the Health Foundation of Washington. He came to Florida for the first time with his parents in 1914. In 1939 he came to Sarasota to spend a vacation and returned each winter thereafter until the fall of 1944 when he established a home here and made extensive real estate purchases, believing in the future of the Land of Sarasota.

Upon making Sarasota his home, he established the Bay View Clinic, which is a diagnostic and treatment clinic where special emphasis is laid on nutrition and physical medicine.

Dr. Miller has taken an active part in community affairs. He is a member of the Lions Club and is chairman of the club's health and welfare committee which sponsored the blood bank during World War II. He is also a member of the Chamber of Commerce, the Florida Naturopathic Physicians Association, the Florida Naturopathic Medical Society, the National Medical Society, American Association for Medico-Physical Research, the National Hospital Association, and is president of the Florida West Coast Naturopathic Physicians Association.

Dr. Miller has lectured before many clubs and organizations on health and related subjects and during 1940-41 delivered a course of lectures over the Mutual Broadcasting System from Washington, D. C., on "Health for the Layman." He is the author of numerous papers on scientific subjects relating to health and physiology and is a staff contributor to several magazines. He is also associate editor of Successful Living Magazine. He is the author of "Little Essays on Life," "How to Get What You Want In Life," and "The Fountain of Youth in Florida."

Many years ago, Dr. Miller became interested in the journeys of Ponce de Leon in his search for the Fountain of Youth. To satisfy his curiosity regarding the location of the health-restoring fountain, Dr. Miller spent months in research work and also made many trips to various parts of Florida. As a result of his study, he became convinced that the fountain is located in the southern part of Sarasota County and is known locally as Big Salt Springs, now being developed into a resort area. (See Index: Salt Springs.)



PHILIP BENNETT HUGUENIN



DR. JONAS E. MILLER

Dr. Miller is a graduate of Bethel Bible School, Washington, D. C., and was ordained to the ministry in January, 1931. He is a member of Sarasota Gospel Lighthouse and a teacher of the adult Bible class.

On December 30, 1922, Mr. Miller was married to Elizabeth Beachy at Norfolk, Va. Dr. and Mrs. Miller had four children: Lois Vivian, born December 27, 1924; James Luke, born February 27, 1927, died December 26, 1940; John Mark, born July 4, 1929, and Mary Elizabeth, born July 29, 1932. Lois Vivian was married to Dave Harmon, of the U. S. Navy, while a student nurse at Sibley Memorial Hospital, Washington, D. C. Mr. and Mrs. Harmon now live in Sarasota.

#### WILLIAM LAWRENCE ADAMS

William Lawrence Adams was born December 16, 1908, in Crisfield, Md., the son of William J. and Annie (Stevenson) Adams. He was graduated from the Crisfield High School in 1926 and from Bryant & Stratton Business College, of Baltimore, Md., in 1927.

After completing the business course, Mr. Adams went into the investment banking business for Gillet & Co., in Baltimore, and in 1928 became associated with L. S. Carter & Co., investment bankers of Baltimore and New York. Soon afterward he became assistant treasurer of the firm.

In 1931, Mr. Adams established his own firm of W. L. Adams & Co., with offices at 63 Wall Street, New York City. Three years later he sold this concern and established the investment banking firm of Lawrence Adams & Co., with offices at 72 Wall Street. In 1939, the name of the firm was changed to Adams, Keister & Co. In 1941, he severed his connection with the business to become president of the Southern Gas & Electric Corp., of Bradenton and Sarasota.

Mr. Adams also is an officer and a member of the board of directors of a number of other public utility corporations throughout the country, his work in this field having started in 1933.

In June, 1942, Mr. Adams entered the Army Air Corps as a second lieutenant and in November, 1945, was placed in an inactive status as a major in order to return to the office of president of the Southern Gas & Electric Corp.

On May 1, 1939, Mr. Adams was married to Barbara Mae Harris, of Baltimore. They established a home in Sarasota in 1940. He is a member of the Sarasota Bay Country Club and the Sarasota Yacht Club.

#### FRANKLIN GUILFORD BERLIN

Franklin Guilford Berlin was born in Kankakee, Ill., February 3, 1905, the son of Guilford and Olive



FRANKLIN GUILFORD BERLIN

(Beatty) Berlin. He was raised on a ranch in New Mexico and was graduated from high school in Duluth, Minn. Later he attended the Hynes School of Pharmacy, in Chicago.

Mr. Berlin began working in a drug store in St. Joseph, Mich., in 1923 and in 1925 was employed by the Walgreen Co. He worked for that concern first in Chicago, then in New York City, and later in the southeast and western districts. From 1932 until 1938 he was district manager for Walgreen Co. for the entire south and had his headquarters in Dallas, Texas.

In 1938, Mr. Berlin went into business for himself in Bradenton. He now owns and operates Bay Drugs with stores in Bradenton, Sarasota, Fort Myers and Clearwater. He established his home in Sarasota in January, 1940.

Mr. Berlin was elected president of the Sarasota County Chamber of Commerce in the fall of 1944 and was re-elected a year later. He is a director of the Rotary Club, the Y.M.C.A. and Community Chest; is a member of the executive council of Sunny Land Council, Boy Scouts of America; chairman of the finance committee of the B.S.A., and a member of Sarasota City Council Advisory Board.

Mr. Berlin also is a member of the Masonic lodge and the First Methodist Church.

On March 14, 1935, Mr. Berlin was married to Mildred Cantrell, Dallas, Tex. Mr. and Mrs. Berlin have two children: Carol, born May 5, 1936, and Franklin Guilford, Jr., born July 1, 1940.

### LEROY T. FENNE

Leroy T. Fenne was born in Scranton, Pa., April 12, 1893, the son of John T. and Susan (Hessinger) Fenne.

While attending school he worked for an art dealer, after school and on Saturdays, for \$1.50 a week. After finishing his schooling he studied pictorial painting on glass under the noted French artist DeVries, becoming an expert in the work. He continued in this field professionally in Scranton, New York, Philadelphia and Cleveland.

In 1922, the auto industry attracted him and he joined a Chevrolet agency in Cleveland as a salesman. At the end of four months he was asked by his employer to take over the sales manager's position.

In 1928, he left the auto retail sales and became one of the pioneers in the business of transporting new automobiles. In 1929, he organized and became president of the Eastern Automobile Forwarding Co., Inc. He later became president of the Transport Carrier Service, Inc. Both concerns have their headquarters in Buffalo, N. Y.

Mr. Fenne started the business on a small scale, employing men to drive away the new cars under their own power. Later in 1929 he put three car carriers in operation. When United States entered World War II, he had 185 automobile convoys on the roads, delivering an average of over 50,000 automobiles per year, transporting to all parts of the eastern United



LEROY T. FENNE

States. These convoys were turned over to the war department at government appraisal prices for use in transporting troops.

Mr. Fenne began visiting Florida's West Coast in 1934. In 1937, he bought a home in Bradenton and started the development of Harbor Hills with E. R. Boeck, of Buffalo, as his associate. In the spring of 1944, he started the Fenne-Howard Motor Sales Co. in Sarasota.

The following winter, Mr. Fenne satisfied a life long ambition—to own and operate a hotel; an ambition developed after having stopped at hotels in all parts of the country. On December 8, 1944, he purchased the Hotel Sarasota, which under his direction has become one of the most popular hotels in the city.

Although a newcomer to Sarasota, Mr. Fenne has taken an active part in civic affairs.

Mr. Fenne is a 32nd degree Mason and is a member of Halcyon Lodge No. 498 F. & A.M. of Cleveland, Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite, Valley of Buffalo, N. Y., Ismailia Temple (Shrine) Buffalo, N. Y., and is a permanent contributing member to the Shriners Hospitals for Crippled Children. He is also a member of Park Country Club, of Buffalo, Florida State Hotel Association, American Hotel Association, Sarasota Yacht Club, and Rotary Club and is one of the directors of the Sarasota Chamber of Commerce.

On August 14, 1927 he was married in Cleveland to Goldie Whitcomb of White River Junction, Vt. Mrs. Fenne is a daughter of Charles and Edith (Chadwick) Whitcomb.

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### JOHNS McCULLEY

Johns McCulley was born in Knoxville, Tenn., November 2, 1899, the son of George Gilson and Margaret (Johns) McCulley. He attended preparatory school at Louisburg and the University of Tennessee, which he left to enlist in the navy in World War I.

After the war ended, he entered the textile business in North Carolina. In 1930 he took over the sales organization of Ragan-Maurice Mills, manufacturers of textiles, and opened offices in Merchandise Mart, in Chicago. He established his home at 1400 Lake Shore Drive.

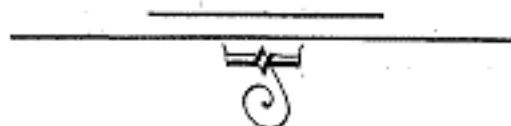
In 1940, he came to Sarasota and made extensive purchases of real estate. He became associated with Jo Gill and with him formed the real estate company of Gill-McCulley, Inc., which now has offices in Sarasota and Venice. The concern owns Cherokee Park, Whitfield Estates and Poinsettia Park and is the exclusive agent for Ringling Isles.

Mr. McCulley is a member of the board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce, the Sun and Surf Club, the Sarasota Yacht Club, and the Rotary Club. He also is a member of the Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago.

On December 3, 1930, Mr. McCulley was married to Annie Lue Elledge, of Pulaski, Tenn.



JOHNS McCULLEY



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